AIMS AND IDEALS OF
ANCIENT INDIAN CULTURE

BY

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PREFACE

The essays on the "Aims and Ideals of Ancient Indian culture" have been written as the result of almost life-long studies in European literature, history, philosophy and our ancestral literature. There was a system of thought developed in India since the days of the Rig-Veda up to the decline of Buddhism, but our education has cut us off from it and made it unintelligible to us, though we are receiving the highest possible education of the modern time. Any one seriously going through the writings of our Rishis will discover that they had a different outlook on the problems of life and this difference was due to the different objects pursued by them. I have tried, in my inadequate way, to present to the reader the objective of the life of our ancestors and the method they followed in attaining that object.

I am very largely indebted to my learned colleague Pandit Upendranath Vidyabhushan, B.A., M.R.A.S., the senior Professor of Sanskrit of the City College, who took great pains in perusing my essays before they were typed. But for his appreciation and encouragement, I could

never think of placing them before the public in a printed form. I beg to quote a few sentences from his appreciation of my humble efforts :

"I am quite pleased to notice that my learned friend is not only an erudite scholar of occidental literature and philosophy, but he has a thorough enlightenment in our ancient literaturo and philosophy as well. The mode of exposition of almost all the different principles of cultural aims and ideals of the people of ancient India, together with their gradual development in accordance with the growth and development of the understanding of the youthful cultivators as explained in the *Sastras* has been quite sincere and is very easily to be understood by all classes of readers. How moral and spiritual culture of our students is essentially necessary together with their physical and intellectual culture (including all scientific knowledge) for the genuine accomplishment of their study has been as clearly pointed out and explained in the pamphlet that, in my humble opinion, should be printed at once by the learned author and brought to the notice of all our educational authorities, so that they may use it for the study of our young pupils, who may hereby have a clear idea of the ancient Hindu principles of culture * * * * Indeed the imperfect mode

of teaching of our pupils has been gradually converting them into a race of godless creatures without any faith and devotion to our Holy Divine Father, our Creator * * * *

"In fact I do not know how much he deserves our heartfelt thanks and gratitude for his long and devoted study of human culture, so highly necessary to us in the genuine education of our country men ; for the future progress and development of our mother land".

Calcutta,
The 16th January,
1938.

The Author.

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TO MY PARENTS IN HEAVEN.

AIMS AND IDEALS OF
ANCIENT INDIAN CULTURE

CHAPTER I

HINDU UNIVERSALISM

The cultural aims and ideals of the people of India have changed, to a certain extent, now-a-days, in their outward forms, and yet those who are thoughtful will admit the validity of the old ideals and regret that they have done wrong by forgetting to mould their lives in accordance with them. The fundamental unity in the aims of the people of different epochs and eras was clearly recognisable till the 7th century A. D. *i. e.* the time of King Harsha of Kanouj. Then there began a new era, which we may call the Mediæval Age. Yet, underlying the different forms, which are not essential, one will find the same spiritual bedrock constituting the basis of Hindu Sádhaná or discipline.

In the development of the ideals there have been certain stages. The early Vedic Rishis,

though theistic, were not so insistently monotheistic as the teachers of the Upanishads. Neither do we find in the early Samhitas the caste-system so thoroughly developed as in the Grihya Sutras or the Smritis.

Again, the cult of *Bhakti* was deeply realised by the writers of the Puranas whose conception of God's personality was an obsession as compared with the Rishis of the Upanishads, who were more meditative and introspective. There has been a continuous growth and progress and this growth has continued inspite of our political dependence. The mediæval cults of Chaitanya, Guru Nanak, and other teachers, such as Dadu, Kabir and other saints are surely signs of the spiritual vitality and vigour of the race.

The great truth that constitutes the foundation of Hindu thinking and Hindu life is the immanence of God in every human heart. God is प्रतिबोध विदितं (Kenopanishat, 2-4—manifest to every intelligence) and this attitude of mind distinguishes the Hindu from other races. The Hindu has thus become a universalist and free from all racial and sectarian narrowness. He is the greatest समदर्शी (believer in equality), in the words of the Gita, because he sees the same God in "ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि शुनि चैव श्वपाके च" (in the

Brahmin, in a cow, in an elephant, in a dog or in an untouchable). He sees the finite existing in the Infinite and the finite acquires its reality by existing in the Infinite. मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा: इव, says the Gita. The Hindu conception of equality is rather transcendental than legal.

Max Muller who appreciated this attitude of the Hindu has the following :

> "If I were asked to indicate by one word the distinguishing feature of the Indian character, as I have tried here to sketch it, I would say it was *transcendent*, using that word, not in the technical sense as fixed by Kant, but in the more general acceptation as denoting a mind bent on transcending the limits of empirical knowledge. There are minds perfectly satisfied with empirical knowledge, a knowledge of facts, well ascertained well classified and well labelled. Such knowledge may assume very vast proportions, and, if, knowledge is power, it may impart great power, real intellectual power to the man who can wield and utilise it. Our own age is proud of that kind of knowledg , and to be content with it and never to attempt to look beyond it, is, I believe one of the happiest states of mind to be in."*

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*Max Muller's *Lecture 111, India, what it can teach us.*

The fundamental aim of the Hindu has been the attainment and realisation of the Infinite. "Speak to him of the finite things", says Max Muller very rightly, "and he will tell you that the finite is impossible and meaningless without the Infinite; speak to him of death, and he will call it birth, speak to him of time, and he will call it the mere shadow of eternity."* And for this he has followed a scheme of three-fold discipline, consisting of the acquisition of *Jnanam* or knowledge and practice of *Bhakti* or devotion and performance of duty or of *Karma*, both ritualistic and ethical. He has believed that these three, when properly pursued, will lead to *Jivanmukti* (salvation while alive in this body). There is no limit to the Sastras he has cultivated, the ceremonies or rites he has performed and the reverence he has given to his God, as the aim of his life was the greatest possible that the human imagination could conceive, viz, the attainment of the *Bhuman* or the great Brahman, who pervades the Universe. The Rishi realised long ago that there was no happiness in the small, finite things of the world, नाल्पेसुखमस्ति (Chhandogyo, VII, 23.—There is no happiness in the small things.) The aims of the lives of all men and

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*Ibid.

women, high or low, Brahmin or Pariah, theists or agnostics, since the Vedic age, have been the realisation of this Universal Reality. Some have called him the great God Brahman, others Nirvan,* others *Baikuntha* or *Goloka*, but they all knew that He alone was the destination for all men. "नृणां गम्यस्त्वमसि एकः," though the paths followed were different for different persons, (according to the principle of अधिकारिभेदः). The greatest philosopher did not object to the crudest form of worship followed by another person, as he admitted the principle of different disciplines for different capacities, and so was perfectly tolerant. His toleration must not be confounded with indifference to or contempt for, superstition, as he sincerely appreciated the value of other modes of Sadhaná or discipline.

The permanent and the predominant element

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* I believe the great Buddha was a theist in his own way and insisted on moral culture, which would lead the pursuer of the eight-fold paths to a realisation, which every one would do in his own life and in his own way or subsequently. The Pitakas were compiled three hundred years after his death and so everyone has a right to make his own guess as to his teachings in consonance with the trend of the culture he insisted upon. Truth is revealed to every earnest soul and Buddha did not assume the role of: "Thus sayeth the Lord."

in the comprehensive scheme of the three-fold disciplines, *Jnan*, *Bhakti* and *Karma* seems to have been *Jnanam*. By stuyding the Hindu Sastras, I have come to the conclusion that the Hindu scheme of Vedic *Karma*, though still believed by many to be efficacious, will be outgrown and replaced by ethical *Karma* and love for others, and the scope of this *Karma* will gradually widen and modern principles of philanthropy, socialism, communism etc., assert their claims and ceremonial *Karma* will disappear. Similarly, the *Bhakti* cult that was beautifully developed in the Puranas, and the mediæval cults that have their roots in the Vedas, where God as a *person* is clearly realised and in the Upanishads also, will gradually lose their vigour in consequence of the scientific development and scientific conception of the universe and of the human life ; and the Vedantic view of God as existing in every individual soul to be realised by meditation will be accepted and acted upon. Thus, the peculiar contribution of the Hindu system of thought to the world-culture will be the discipline of *Jnanam*, which forms the main purpose of all human endeavours. It is said that in the time of Gautama Buddha there were sixty-three systems of philosophy existing here and what remains of those systems constitute

a far greater philosophical literature than the similar literature of any other country. This is a peculiarity of the Hindu mind. It may believe in *Karma*, it may accept the theory of incarnation and revealed books, but it ultimately relies on the realisation of the *Brahman* in the individual soul. The greatness and the strength of the Hindu system of thought consists in this. It will discard all revelations made to others, taking its stand on the revelation made to itself. नासौमुनिर्यस्य मतं न भिन्नं (one who does not arrive at his own conclusion is no thinker or meditator). In no other system has philosophy been thus harmonised with faith so frankly and fearlessly. It is not afraid of heresy or schism and is characterised by a catholicity unthinkable for others. It is strong by basing its theism on the highest philosophy of the Vedantic monism or unity of Godhead of the Upanishads. Godless philosophising or moralising has not appealed to the Asiatic mind and therefore Buddhism is surviving in Japan and other lands by establishing faith in prayers and a personal God and allying them with an ethical philosophy. Confucianism, a wholly ethical system, had not given complete satisfaction to the Chinese mind, as it lacked theism and hence the people of China welcomed the incarnation of Buddha. In

India, the Vedantic system incarnates God in every man and woman. Herein lies the superiority of this system over all other philosophies, whether ancient or modern. If the Absolutist philosophers of modern Europe succeed in devising a practical theism as the result of their thinking and ratiocination and can make room for prayers and other modes of spiritual exercise, their systems may survive, otherwise their systems will remain in the closets and studies of philosophers to be academically discussed like the systems of the stoics, by students and their teachers. Worship of the purest form based on the highest teaching and purest morality will be the religion of the cultured classes in future. Even in the early Vedic days this pure form of religion was grasped and in the twentieth century we have not been able to supersede it. The Vedic hymns consider the sun, the moon, etc., as the manifestation of one personality, just as we do. This is the *Sanatana* or permanent element in the Rig Veda and in all our religious literatures. The following passage from Dr. Winternitz corroborates our view :

"What renders these hymns so valuable for us is that we see before us in them a mythology in the making. We see gods, as it were, rising

> before our eyes. Many of the hymns are not addressed to the sun-god, nor to a moon-god, nor to a fire-god, nor to a god of the heavens, nor to storm-gods and water deities, nor to a goddess of the dawn and an earth-goddess, but the shining sun itself, the gleaming moon in the nocturnal sky, the fire blazing on the hearth or on the altar, even the lightning shooting forth from the cloud, the bright sky of day, or the starry sky at night, the roaring storms, the flowing waters of the cloud and rivers, the glowing dawn and the spread-out fruitful earth—all these natural phenomena are, as such, glorified and invoked."*

To us also all the great and glorious things of nature, the mighty sea, "the throne of the Almighty," are all symbols of God, as they were to our Vedic fathers.

What are called the ethical cults, such as, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity or Islam—, they have all fostered disciplines and cultures accordant to the teachings of their prophets and sages, who had an uncompromising attitude against the so-called evils and sins as conceived by them. There was an unbridgeable gulf between the truths they believed and the truths believed by other people and they considered

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* History of Indian Literature Vol. I.

these truths as falsehoods and denounced them. Their god or gods alone were the true gods and the gods of others false. Their sacred books alone they believed to be revealed and infallible and there could be no other revelation differing from their scriptures. From this mentality followed their quarrels with others and people of different faiths. This narrow view of truth is giving way before the march of modern culture and scientific spirit, though the masses following these cults are still largely influenced by this sectarian view of truths. They also claim their cults to be universal, i. e., meant for all men, but they deny the freedom of thought to the individual, though reasonable thinkers among them are outgrowing the narrow patriotic interpretation of the particular revelations they depend on. The Hindu believes in revelations made to every man.

They follow what may be called a logic of exclusion or antithesis that lacks synthesis. Evil and good in it are in permanent warfare with each other. The Vedantic system, which really is the sum total of Hindu philosophising, is a philosophy of inclusion or synthesis. Evil and good are related in its estimation. The moral development of man, according to this system, takes place through his attempts at overcoming

the evils, which serve him as a ladder for rising upwards. His effort at melioration is a prolonged one, if not eternal and he will approach God in perfection; ultimately his purification will come through divine grace that will place him beyond the reach of duality.

In this system, both Ram and Ravana are counterparts of each other and serve to exhibit the *lila* of God for the establishment of the principles of righteousness. The deep lessons of the Ramayan, viz, filial devotion, womanly chastity and conjugal fidelity, devotion of a younger brother to an elder and other moral principles that support our life in the family and the society, the ideal of kingship, etc, are beautifully taught. This broad-based philosophy has made the Hindu what he is, i. e., tolerant, catholic, but sometimes weak and lukewarm in his reforming zeal, because nothing is an absolute evil in his estimation. He can discard nothing. He pays his homage to all Sastras and gurus. He obeys all the Smritis and pleads them before the High courts. He does not as yet think that a codification of the Smritis is possible; neither does he care to harmonise the contradictions, if any, in them.

He lacks the missionary spirit that has characterised the professors of dualistic meta-

physics, whose reforming zeal is a commendable thing, no doubt, but who cannot deny their responsibility for crusades and *Jehads* by which they have deluged the world with human blood. The Buddhist missionaries also were moral propagandists, but their *Ahimsa* or love for all made them averse from destroying any thing. Their fundamental principles were love and sympathy. They did not use the influence of the flag or political suzerainty and were never suspected to be exploiters of other races. They were welcomed. Their *Maitri*, and *Karuna* (love and pity) made them friends to all. They were absolutely free from any selfish motive, having no axe of their own to grind.

They never forced any truth down the throat of any one ; nor did they claim to be monopolists of truths. They being wayfarers were anxious to help other wayfarers along the path of eternity. They preached their principles of love throughout the world and acted on them. They were accepted as teachers and so even to-day half of humanity owes allegiance to them. The professors of the principles of Equality, Fraternity and Liberty of the 18th century France were opposed at every step and this opposition caused a bath of blood for whole Europe, as the French lacked love of man in propagating their ideals.

They did not actually care for the soul of man and were fighting for political rights. People of modern times talk of the principles pertaining to the soul, but apply them to the body and create troubles. They profess certain philosophy but do not live up to it. They cannot live in amity with their own brothers, far less with others. They cannot harmonise others with themselves, as their ego is a big thing excluding all others, ousting them from the sphere they occupy. Modern reformers are impatient against evils. The dualistic metaphysics cannot account for the origin of evil and represents Satan as co-eternal with the Eternal. Zoroaster has not been able to account for the origin of evil. The toleration of the professors of dualistic metaphysics is lip-deep and superficial and not sincere. Hence, inspite of the veneer of culture, their narrow mentality often comes out and creates clash. They are thus ruthless enemies and uncompromising reformers. The Hindu cannot hate the evil so strongly. He is therefore weak against the attack of others. He is patient and humble and cannot claim to be absolutely right. He bends before the storm, but does not break.

The Hindu is an optimist and hopes for the best, because the philosophy he follows is robust

against all evils which are related to good and he aims at the realisation of God. He is other-worldly essentially and extends his hopes beyond the narrow limits of this life. He believes in re-births and relies on the principle that he may fail in this life, yet, ultimately he will win. The Gita echoes this hope by teaching that this life is a passing phase, though it has a meaning. बहूनाम् जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते (the follower of *Jnanam* will attain God being purified at the end of many births) and "जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युः ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च" (those who are born will surely die and those who die will surely be born again) are really inspiring beliefs and set death at naught. This optimism has made the Hindu strong to bear the ills and failures and has enabled him to weather the storms that have blown over India. India has lessons to teach to the world as regards the soul, though she may learn much from others as regards the body.

As the Greeks and the Romans were the originators of the civilisation of modern Europe, it will not be an unnecessary digression to institute a comparison between them and the Hindus. The Greeks were a wise people; so were the Romans. But it is difficult to recognise the present generations as the descendants of Plato and Cicero. The cause is not far to seek.

They did not live up to the philosophy they taught. There has been a divorce between their lives and the philosophy they taught, then as well as now. With the Hindu religion was based on philosophy and life was led according to the teachings of that philosophy. Europe even now professes one thing and practises another. Very few care for the principles taught in the Sermon on the Mount, though they loudly preach them. They rather act in direct contradiction to these teachings in regulating their international affairs and consider them as unpractical. Here certain sages lived up to the highest truths they taught. We, the disciples of European teachers, are now very apt pupils and are characterised by hypocrisy and insincerity. *Mukti* or spiritual salvation was the *summum bonum* of life and therefore Savari, when she thought that her *Mukti* was ensured by seeing Ramchandra, she mounted the pyre and freed herself thus from the clog of the body. Many kings, when they thought the work of life had been finished, starved themselves to death by listening to religious discourses, by performing what is called the *Prayapoveshana Brata* (dying by fasting). Charles V was the only European king who retired into a monas-

tery in old age, after abdicating the throne in favour of his son, Philip II. Here are people who actually live according to the principles of the Sermon on the Mount and they are householders. They do not retaliate by being insulted and do not return blow for blow. They observe the truth of the principle taught by Manu :

सुखं ह्यवमतो शेते सुखं च प्रतिबुध्यते ।
सुखं चरति लोके ऽस्मिन् अवमन्ता विनश्यति ॥

[The man who is insulted sleeps and wakes happily— ; he moves in this world happily, but the offender is ruined].

The political indifference of the ancient Hindu was quite reasonable. Political freedom had little meaning for him. His life did not require it, as he was not robbed and oppressed by his King. We may in this connection quote a few sentences from James Mill's History of India, Vol. I, as to the character of the Hindu Kings : In practice Hindu despotism did not exist. The Raja was not above the law. "Law," says Shankara, "is the King of Kings, far more powerful than they" He was not a law-giver, the laws to which he was amenable as well as the meanest of his subject emanated from a higher. He was not even permitted to administer it without legal advisor".

Plato's dream of a philosopher-king was realised in India. Even the dreams of Sir Thomas More in the *Utopia* were actualities in the life of the Indians as the testimony of the Greek ambassadors at the court of Chandra Gupta bears out. Hindu kings were mostly like Ram chandra and Judhistir. King Harsha of the seventh century A. D., whom the Chinese traveller Yuan Chuang met and has eulogistically referred to in the account of his travels, practised charity and toleration not to be dreamt of by any European ruler of men. The ideals of kingship as enumerated in Manu Samhita will prove clearly what ideals were developed here. In the same Manu, mention is made of a wicked king Vena, who was deposed by the Rishis for his misgovernment. If the twentieth century England may be proud of her monarchy, we Hindus may more reasonably say that it was the privilege of the people of India to be ruled by kings, who exercised their authority according to the laws promulgated by the Rishis. European writers wonder at the absence of political freedom and political agitation in ancient India, forgetting that the people were not fleeced by their kings, as they were elsewhere, and here people were free from wants and cared more for spiritual liberation. They did not require to be

protected from king Jhons by Magnacharters or Bills of Rights. Their Bills of Rights were written by their Rishis and were inviolable by kings. The ideal of political freedom appeals now very strongly to us as we are being robbed, starved and gradually impoverished. Our ancestors required spiritual freedom and they had it as much as they wanted. Anaxagoras, the guru of Socrates, could not have religious freedom at the democratical city of Athens, the eye of Europe, and fled thence to save his life. The liberty-loving people of Athens put Socrates to death for preaching some innovation in religion, in the fifth century B. C., and here Buddha of the 6th century B. C, the greatest heretic as he was, rejected the Vedas, and yet was deified and worshipped as an incarnation of God ! The freedom-worshipping people of Europe are anxious to enslave the whole of Asia and Africa, because there are some weak races living. Some European writers and their disciples among us refer to the injustices to the Sudras and wax eloquent on the iniquity of our old sociology: According to good authorities those Sudras who were prohibited from the Vedas no longer exist ; neither was the status of the Sudras so bad as that of the Helots of Sparta or of the slaves of the British planters in America up to the 19th century. J. S.

Mill has made the following comments in his History.

> "The condition of a Sudra in the Hindu system was infinitely preferable to that of the Helots, the slave or the serf of the Greek, the Roman and the feudal systems. He was independent, his services were optional; they were not agricultural but domestic and personal, and claimed adequate compensation. He had the power of accumulating wealth, or the injunction against his doing so would have been superfluous. He had the opportunity of rising to rank, for the Puranas record dynasties of Sudra kings."

It is very doubtful if "untouchability" ever existed in ancient time in the form in which it does now in the southern presidency of Madras. In the Smritis certain castes are described as low in status, but they were not oppressed like the Helots. The prohibition of the Sastra to other castes and the monopolisation of all culture in the Sastras by the Brahmins seems to be the effect of the revival of Hinduism after the decline of Buddhism. Buddhism was undoubtedly an enlightening movement, but it declined and even the monks became idle and demoralised. The monasteries became centres of corruption and vices and the laity also became worldly-minded and

careless of culture. In Bengal during the time of the Buddhist kings, the Pal Rajas, the study of Vedas and other Hindu Sastras was neglected and hence when a revival took place under Adisur and the Sen Rajas, it was the authors of the revival movement, i. e. the Brahmins and the Brahmannised castes, such as Vaidyas and others, who cared for new culture, were anxious for the Sastras and thus the exclusion of the general mass of people from the ancient culture took place. Otherwise in the ancient times all Aryan castes were entitled to study the Vedas and some of the Kshatriya kings were great teachers of the truths of the Upanishads.

The division of the Hindu life into the well-known four Asrams and four castes was a religious organisation. These divisions, therefore, now seem to be inconvenient as the very object of our life is quite different. They did not care to die like an old horse in the harness, but wanted to prepare themselves by prayers and meditations for death. Hence they retired into the forests and maintained the life of the body by begging. Even kings did not consider it humiliating to beg. They had no political urge in their life. The higher castes also did not utilise their advantageous position to exploit others. They were limbs of the same social organism

to serve it by learning and piety of the Brahmins, by the fighting and administrative capacity of the Kshatriyas and by the commercial and trading activity of the Vaisyas. They all felt a *noblesse oblige* and rendered service according to the capacity of each. The Bramhins and the Rishis embraced poverty and led simple life, because pursuit of wealth was not consistent with the cultivation of knowledge and practise of meditation. A Brahmin was never to serve anybody, "नश्व वृत्त्या कदाचन" (he must not serve any body) "सेवा श्ववृत्ति राख्याता तस्मात्तां परिवर्जयेत्" (Manu IV. 4—serving another is called a dog's pursuit and Brahmins must abjure it). There were greedy and covetous Brahmins then as now, though the ideal was different.

From the above it should not be concluded that the Hindus of old were a set of dreamers and spiritual enthusiasts forgetful of the interests and welfare of life in its varied aspects. This conclusion will be found to be quite erroneous, if we consider how they cultivated all the sciences that life required. Students of modern science will profit by studying what the Hindus discovered in the sciences, dealing with the human body and mind as well as the surrounding facts of nature. Hindu Astronomy, Astrology, Mathematics, Geometry, Music, Chemistry,

Logic, Metaphysics, Philosophy, Phonetics, Grammar will teach new truths to an earnest student. They could adapt themselves to the surroundings and have thus survived. They used their organs for the purpose of observing the facts of nature, though they were not anxious to conquer nature to make her minister to their comfort. The Vedas clearly indicate that they made careful observation of the facts of nature and of their environment. Both men and women contributed to the making of the Vedas, the store-house of the wisdom of men in those days. When they dived deep into the mind, they discovered the deep philosophical truths and started those deep enquiries into human nature that are even now beyond the ken of the people of other countries. Though the Rig-vedas are the earliest records of the human wisdom and observation, yet it is quite true that men must have begun to think countless generations earlier. The beautiful hymns must have been sung and recited long before they came to be recorded, and preserved for the future generations. No guess is yet possible as to the date of their composition, though some think that the recent discoveries made at Mohenjodaro may, in course of time, throw some fresh light on the civilisation of the pre-vedic eras. The

antiquity of the Hindu culture goes beyond our capacity to calculate it.

As I am concerned, with the aims and ideals of the ancient Indian culture, I shall follow a historical method and glean some grains form the records they have left us. I shall have to take a bird's eye view of different branches of knowledge they pursued, during the long period of their history, since the days of the Rig Veda and see if any changes took place, from time to time, in their outlook on life. Fortunately there have not been any revolutionary changes in the ideals and social organisations of the Hindus, who may still be recognised as descendants of the Rishis. We have already referred to the continuity of the cultural ideals up to the 7th century A. D. The organisation of the family life has remained the same, since the days of the Rig Veda and even now we consider the main object of education to be the enlightenment of the soul and ultimate attainment of salvation, though during the last hundred years or so, since the introduction of the modern education, service under the state and money-making by following the learned professions seem to have become the object of the educated people.

I shall accordingly make an attempt at discovering the cultural aims of our ancestors in

the Vedas, Smritis, Upanishads, philosophies, the Buddhist and Jaina writings and the Purans, and other forms of literature. What is now known as the classical Sanskrit literature consisting of dramas, *Kavyas*, tales, etc. does not create any divergence in the ideals of life, though their writers were great masters of style and had artistic ideas that will compare very favourably with the artistic conception of other races. They never believed in Beauty as something standing apart from Truth or Good, and never broke away from the lofty ideals of life as conceived by the Rishis of old. They only changed the form of literature, which, by the very laws of growth and literary evolution, became inevitable. Civilisation had greatly advanced in the time of Kalidas and Bhababhuti and the forms of literature became refined and complex. The simple Anustub Chhanda could no longer be considered as a beautiful vehicle for giving musical expression to man's ideas. The science of music had been developed during the ages that had elapsed between the earliest days of the Vedic singers and the contemporaries of Kalidas, and hence the form of poetry became more complex. There is a beautiful growth towards complexity and refinement in the language and literature which has been noticed by all Indologists.

We have already seen that in the spiritual endeavours of the Hindus there were three *Margas* or methods of *Jnana*, *Bhakti* and *Karman* followed and these were not necessarily antagonistic to each other, but rather were harmonised and synthesised, so that in order to understand the cultural history of the Hindus we have to trace the workings of these methods throughout the life history of our ancestors. The author of the Gita, as we shall see later on, more in detail, who was a master of the entire Hindu literature and whose sympathies were the widest, brings about a beautiful समन्वय or harmony among these methods. He clearly points out the importance of the ethical principles as developed by the Buddhists and other heterodox thinkers along with the importance of rituals. The Hindu mind is peculiarly inclind towards a harmony among all the contending aims and objects of life and his recognition of God in everything and everywhere is not merely a lip-profession or an intellectual concept but the very life-principle. All narrow principles of class, caste, country, community etc. are diametrically opposed to the fundamental universalism which characterises the Hindu belief. It is this great truth, as propounded and practised by the great saint Ramkrishna Paramhansa, that is being now preached

by our countrymen throughout the world. It is this tendency to universalism of the Hindu that should be clearly grasped and cultivated for the purpose of solving the social and political problems of to-day.

The virility and catholicity of the Hindu thought system has been demonstrated by the greatest universalist, Raja Rammohan Roy, Pandit Dayananda Saraswati and others, also, and lastly our beloved poet Rabindranath Tagore, and we hope that as time will go on, we shall also produce scientists and workers in other fields to demonstrate their heritage from the Rishis. Dr. Sir J. C. Bose, I trust, has amply demonstrated his lineage from the author of the Manu Samhita, who said about trees long ago,

"तमसा बहुरूपेण वेष्टिताः कर्म्म-हेतुना।
अन्तःसंज्ञाः भवन्त्येते सुख-दुःख समन्विताः॥"

(Trees are covered with Tamas-darkness, through their *Karman*, but have inward sensation and are capable of feeling pleasure and pain). We have to study our Sastras more earnestly, specially the Upanishads, and propagate this truth for establishing peace and harmony in the family of mankind. The world needs this message.

CHAPTER II

THE METHOD OF EDUCATION

In order to grasp clearly the method of education, we should bear in mind certain important facts that made the relation between the teacher and the taught so sacred. Though we may not agree with Max Muller and other Indologists, who deny the existence of the art of writing in ancient India, before the 4th century B. C., or the time of Panini, yet there is no doubt that the Rig Veda and other Vedas were at first composed orally and taught to the pupils by oral recitation. The teachers were the living books from whom truths had to be gleaned and memorised. This made the teacher's position so important and so indispensable. The deep reverence that the pupil paid to the teacher was largely due to this fact. Even after the invention of the art of writing, books were difficult to be procured and costly and therefore preference was given to the method of oral teaching. The teacher being, moreover, a deeply religious man and reputed for his learning, commanded a great veneration from the pupil. Neither did he receive any fee from the student,

who rather lived with him and served him as a son and a servant, not being above even the menial works. They used to pay some *dakshina* to the teacher or Guru, while going away after finishing their education. This payment they made voluntarily and not out of any compulsion. The kings and rich men gave donations for the maintenance of both teachers and pupils and the teachers had never any wants. There were Rishis who were called kulapatis,* because they used to maintain and teach ten thousand pupils. Both the methods followed and the objects they had in view made them docile, submissive and amenable to rules. There was an equality among the students and the vanity of the rich man's son was not flattered. In the Srimad-Bhagabatam we read an episode in which we see Sreekrishna, the king of Dwarka, one day receiving a fellow pupil of his, named Sudama, who was the son of a poor Brahmin and seating him on the throne, reminds him of their experience of one day, when they went to bring fuel for their

* Now-a-days we experience great difficulties in maintaining discipline in a boarding-house accomodating two or three hundred students, who are all more or less lawless and defiant and on the slightest provocation break out into rebellion. This is the advance we have attained under the modern organisation of the European education under which we are progressing !

teacher from the forest and were benighted in the wood, on account of a storm, and so their teacher had to go out to search for them. Thus a prince and a poor man's son had to do the same duties and were treated in the same way. They had no periodical examinations of the type we have organised and thereby made the acquisition of knowledge dlfficult, if not impossible, because we put a premium on a show of knowledge and make the student an insincere votary of the goddess of learning. We make our pupils vain, egoistic and selfish by giving prizes and showing preference in rewarding. The true enlightenment of the soul is thus made impossible under the present method. In those days the students had to daily recite the lessons already learned either to themselves or to senior pupils and this was called their *Swádhyáya*. Moreover, disputations or discussions among the pupils were held and they debated with each other. The teacher perhaps served as an umpire and pointed out the errors in the argumentation. Even now our Pandits hold such disputations at the houses of rich men, where they are invited during Sradhs or marriages and acquire name and fame thereby. Human nature requires materialistic gratifications, no doubt, and this was provided in those days also, yet the evil tendency of selfishness was

not so shamelessly and frankly encourged as it is done by the principle of competition, which has been philosophically and even ethically supported by the school of Herbert Spencer and other evolutionists in the nineteenth century. Another fact in this connection is that pupil-teachers were employed and senior students were entrusted with the education of the juniors, otherwise it would, by no means, be possible for one man to teach ten thousand pupils.

मुनीनां दशसाहस्रं योऽन्नदानादिपोषणात्
अध्यापयति विप्रर्षिः सोऽसौ कुलपतिस्मृतः । (*Manu*)

This important method, says Dr. Sir B. N. Seal, was introduced into England by an English observer, who had come out to India, and had noticed it, at the beginning of the 19th century. Dr. Seal holds that till the 18th century, he gives a definite date, 1810, India was intellectually the most advanced country in the world and that our intellectual decline began in the 19th century.* This method of

* The scientific and philosophical greatness of modern Europe is really a thing of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, whereas the greatness of Indian thought system had been attained earlier than the days of Plato, and Plato's system cannot be considered as great as that of the Rishis, e. g. of Yajnavalkya in the *Brihadaranyaka*.

employing pupil-teachers may very profitably be revived, if India is to be made literate like other countries.

Another fact that strikes one while reading the Hindu literature, which was, as a whole, studied and mastered, and even now there are Pandits of encyclopaedic attainments, is that they were much more earnest and devoted to the pursuit of knowledge. Knowledge with them was a means of attaining Mukti or salvation and hence the minimum period they devoted to their education was twelve years; and at least one of the Vedas had to be mastered. Manu says:

वेदानधीत्य वेदौ वा वेदं वापि यथाक्रमम्

अविप्लुत ब्रह्मचर्यो गृहस्थाश्रम माविशेत्।

(*Manu*—III. 2.)

[A man should become a householder after mastering all the Vedas, or two of them or at least one.]

Those who were more earnest used to spend thirty-two years with their Guru or some even the whole life and they lived by begging for the teacher and serving him to attain enlightenment.

It seems that of the learned Rishis each was the centre of a school and thus the Vedas and Smritis and other branches of learning came to

be divided, but there was not much of jealousy or rivalry. They adopted truths from each other. They were the universities and the kings and rulers did not interfere with them. Max Muller has some beautiful remarks on the simple lives they led and the great devotion with which they pursued knowledge: "We cannot dissociate intellectual life from cities, from palaces, from schools, universities, museums, and all the rest. However, the real life of India was not lived in towns, but in villages and forests * * * Here the old sages were free to meditate on the problems of life and on all that is nearest to the heart of man. If they were not philosophers, let them be called dreamers, but dreamers of dréams without which life would hardly be worth-living."*

The Buddhist monasteries of Nalanda and Taxila have been called by European writers universities. But we do not think any charter was granted by kings to create them into body corporates. The Mediæval Universities of Europe took their rise under the patronage of kings and potentates. Here also the munificence of kings supported learning, who did not interfere with the teachers and did not grant rights for

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* Six Systems of Philosophy.

conferring degrees. Great teachers were recognised first by their pupils and others came gradually to acknowledge their claims to superiority. Disputations they held among themselves and kings would reward the victor.

In this connection I may refer to the episode narrated in the third chapter, first Brahman, of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, where we read that Raja Janaka invited thousands of Brahmins to a sacrifice and in order to test who was the most erudite philosopher among them, he placed before them one thousand cows to each horn of which he had fastened ten padas of gold and offered them as *reward* to him who was the greatest in the knowledge of the *Brahman*. None of the Brahmins present dared to claim the cows except sage Yajnavalkya, who asked one of his pupils to drive the cows to his place. This enraged the other Brahmins, who felt humiliated by this act of the Rishi, who humorously replied to the questions of the Brahmins, if he considered himself as the greatest philosopher knowing the *Brahman*, by saying that he would bow down to the knower of the *Brahman*, but as none else came forward to claim the cows and he was fond of cows and liked to have them, he had got them driven to his place. He was then heckled with questions by the Brahmins, all of whom

the Rishi silenced by his replies. This story illustrates the method by which the Rishis became known in the world of the erudite as well as how they were maintained. The Hindu community even to-day maintains the Pandits, who are carrying on the tradition of learning and piety among us.

I must point out the two important truths by which the Brahmins of India kept up the ideals of piety and disinterested love of knowledge. It was by embracing simplicity and poverty and by making the pursuit of knowledge an eternal duty, so that like Ulysses they considered "life piled on life" as not an adequate time for acquiring knowledge. The author of the Gita says :

"बहूनांजन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते" VII. 19.

[A man becomes fully enlightened after passing through many lives.]

Thus the acquisition of knowledge was a possession not to be exchanged for big salaries or getting credit from man, neither for acquiring power over the forces of nature. The Rishi was rather anxious for harmonising his life with the forces of Nature and being at one with her. He was not anxious for conquering her to make his life comfortable. When we expose our body to the soothing touch of agreeable breezes, we

realise a higher benefit than the mere tactual sensation. The Hindu lived beyond mere empiricism and through the senses rose to a supersensuous height. The Indriyas or the senses led him to a reality above them.

We now object to their division of castes and do not care for the division of life into four stages, as we aspire like the Europeans to die in the harness. We profess to be great votaries of work and pay lip-homage to the monkish principle "*laborare est orare*" (work is worship). But according to the conception of our Rishis, who attached importance to heredity, the division of people into castes and assignment of different duties to different groups of people was most reasonable. The scramble and competition that we see now among ourselves for occupying the advantageous berths and for following the lucrative professions and the consequent brutalisation of the human nature by fostering its selfish propensities will cause the thoughtful man to hesitate before he will blame the Rishis. The Brahmins monopolised the pursuit of knowledge, later on, but not in the days even of Manu, when only Sudras were excluded from the privilege of acquiring knowledge of the Vedas. But those Sudras are extinct in Bengal, at least. I do not deny that the institution of caste has led to

many abuses and to much weakening of the Hindu, who became incapable of self-defence when attacked from outside. When India was invaded by outsiders, all other classes except the rulers and Kshatriyas were indifferent spectators. This cannot but be regarded as the most deplorable effect of the caste system.

Again, while writing on the mode of education prevailing in ancient time, we cannot but refer to the fact that the teaching and training in the arts and industries which were so highly developed, the institution of caste has played a very inportant part. In other countries great efforts had to be made by kings and chiefs for improving the industries. In India the customs and manners of the castes being well defined and systematised, no such interference by the ruling power was necessary. Any one who will read the history of the development of the industries in mediæval or modern Europe and compare it with the old methods followed either in Greece or India, will have to admit the reasonableness and efficiency of the people of India. In ancient Greece also people followed the occupation of their parents and ancestors, though everybody among them had to fight. The thing is the Hindu system of life was more favourable to spiritual growth and development of man, and the

country being rich and fertile and life simple, the struggle for existence was not so keen. Here people had no need to go to foreign lands seeking means of livelihood. The caste system did not create difficulties in their way. There was no such competition, which has already reached the limits and perhaps the twentieth century will have to eliminate it, in some way or other, and check its operation.

The division of life into four stages, again, was helpful towards the pursuit of knowledge. It is not that they did not care for the various sciences, though, later on, the Vedas acquired the greatest importance. But, to begin with, Veda meant *Jnana* or Knowledge and it included all the branches of learning they had developed.* Was it not reasonable that in the last two stages, when they retired from the life of a householder, after attaining the age of fifty, that they should devote themselves to the higher thinking of the Upanishads and to the preparation for meeting death calmly? To the Rishis death was not a terrible thing, but only a means of attaining immortality. For this they were anxious

* We may refer to the six traditional divisions of the Vedas consisting of, "शिक्षा कल्प व्याकरण निरुक्त छन्दज्योतिषमिति ।"

about realising the unity that prevails in the universe.

To overcome death, the realisation of this unity is the best means.* Their culture was so regulated that *Jnana*, *Bhakti* and *Karman* all these three tended to the same result, viz, overcoming the desires. *Jnana* led to the realisation or complete grasp of the nature of the soul; *Karman*, whether ritualistic or ethical, led to the purification of the heart, and *Bhakti* or love of God also was necessary to inspire men for acquiring knowledge and doing the duties. The main principle in their culture was that the pursuit of knowledge, and performance of the various duties should be enlivened by the belief in God, for whose satisfaction we are to be active, or do our *karma*.

To appreciate the earnestness of the ancient people properly, we should remember that education was not a means of earning one's livelihood except for the Brahmins, who, no doubt, later on, began to exclude other castes from the acquisition of deeper knowledge,† and gradu-

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* मृत्योः स मृत्युमाप्नोति य इह नानेव पश्यति । *Katha.* IV. 10.

† This perhaps took place after the decline of Buddhism. In the Buddhist monasteries the monks pursued all the branches of learning and the Brahmins

ally a sort of rivalry seems to have arisen between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas, many among whom became great teachers of *Brahma-Jnana*. The Brahmins being more in touch with rituals and performance of sacrifices and ceremonies belauded and exaggerated their values. Hence in the days of the *Aupanishadic* philosophising, we find Brahmins resorting to Kshatriya kings for acquiring deeper spiritual knowledge. In the Kaushitaki Upanishad Chapter IV we read an episode to this effect.

> "Gargya, the son of a Brahmin named Balaka, who, it seems, acquired some fame for his learning and *Brahma-Jnana*, went to Ajatasatru, the king of Kasi, to get some reward from that king by exhibiting his knowledge before him, and so began to tell the king of the existence of the *Brahman* in the sun, the moon, the lightning, the cloud the air, the fire, water, mirror, etc. The king silenced him by saying that these were no new truths to him and gradually the haughty young Brahmin realised that he had caught a Tartar, as we say, in king Ajatasatru."

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were not monopolists. When the mediæval decline began and Brahmins acquired an ascendency, they excluded other castes from the study of deeper things.

Ajatasatru then moralised thus :—

"In vain did you offer to speak to me about *Brahman.*" "Then this Brahmin who was sincerely a student and anxious to learn truths, "approached the king with firewood in his hand in the manner of a candidate for initiation, saying" "Let me be initiated by you." Ajatasatru said to him, "It would be contrary to the nature of things that a Kshatriya should initiate a Brahmin. Come, I shall teach you (without performing the ceremony of initiation), etc.*

Evidently by the 6th century B. C. when *Brihadaranyaka*, *Kaushitaki* and *Chhandogya* were composed, the teaching profession seems to have become a monopoly of the Brahmins, but the Kshatriyas, being also educated, but not devoted to the performance of the rituals, were more earnest enquirers into spiritual truths. It was during this period of deep search after truth that both Mahavir and Gautama started their enquiries, denying the authority of the Vedas, basing their investigation simply on the moral nature of man. We shall see in the sequel what the nature of their enquiries were and what contribution they made to the Indian culture. The methods followed in

* *Tattvabhushan.*

the monasteries of the Buddhist and Jaina teachers seem to have differed little from that of the Hindu *Acharyyas.* In the monasteries also the teacher and the taught lived together. But as the monks were often out on mission work and only during the rainy season, for four months, were confined to the monasteries, those months were devoted to more earnest works. And as they were all mendicants, they had not to return home on finishing their education. The vast Buddhist and Jaina literatures prove the intellectual vigour of the leaders, who were so earnest in their enquiries. I may quote here a few sentences from the Travels of Yuan Chuang for the purpose of giving a better idea of the kind of life they led in the famous monastery of Nalanda :

> "In the establishment were some thousands of brethren, all men of great learning and ability, several hundred being highly esteemed and famous. The brethren were very strict in observing the precepts and the regulations of their order ; they were looked up to as models by all India ; learning and discussing they found the day too short, day and night they admonished each other, juniors and seniors mutually helping to perfection. * * * * Foreign students came to the establishment to put an end to their doubts. and

then became celebrated, and those who stole the name of Nalanda brothers were all treated with respect wherever they went. Of those from abroad who wished to enter the school for discussion, the majority beaten by the difficulties of the problems withdrew ; those who were deeply versed in ancient and modern learning were admitted, only two or three out of ten succeeding."

How vigorous an intellectual life they led in the monastery is clear from the above account. The professors of that place were world-famous men. They included all kinds of learning in their curriculum. As regards the library of the monastery at Jetavan, the same traveller says :

"The Libraries were richly furnished not only with orthodox literature but also with vedic and other non-Buddhist works and with treatises on the arts and sciences taught in India at that time."

Does not this devotion to learning put us to shame ? If we possessed a quarter of this enthusiasm, we might have done much better work than we are doing at the official universities. They were not anxious for salaries, but for truths. When Yuan Chuang visited India (630-645 A. D.), Taxila was almost desolate, though the monasteries were numerous. It had been a great centre of scientific learning, specially of the Medical Science. Kumarlabdha,

Aswaghosh, Deva and Nagarjuna were four stars illuminating the world," says the Traveller. It was a part of the empire of Asoka. There is no doubt that in India in those days great respect was shown to men of learning. As regards the natives of Mathura Yuan Chuang says :

> "The people believed in the working of *Karma* and paid respect to moral and intellectual eminence. There were in the district twenty monasteries with 2000 brethren who were diligent students of both vehicles".

Unfortunately we have not got accounts of the earlier times. Yet what we read in Manu and other books, such as the Mahabharata where the stories of Ekalavya's and Karna's devotion to their Gurus are described, we may safely infer the great zeal people felt for knowledge. Even now people look upon education as a means of spiritual birth and the illiteracy of the present time is the result of poverty and want of self-reliance, which has been undermined during the last hundred years or so. We must educate ourselves, in despite of our poverty and the apathy of the rulers.

The most important point, however, in the educational systems of the ancient people was the serious view of culture : A boy was initiated in his eighth year (वर्षेऽष्टमाब्दे कुर्वीत ब्राह्मणस्योपनायन) by

a religious teacher into a new life of Brahmacharyya and physical hardship, nothing less rigorous than the discipline undergone by the Spartan youth, according to the laws of Lycurgus. In the days of the Rig Veda there were institutions conducted by renowned teachers and even then Brahmacharyya was the basis of studentship. Studentship gradually developed and in the time of the Atharva Veda it became well established and regulated by certain customs. Professors Macdonelle and Keith both observe that the practice of studentship gradually developed and was strictly regulated by customs, as time went on.

> "But it is regularly assumed and discussed in later vedic literature, being obviously a necessary part of the vedic society. The custom of the Student's Upanayan (Lit. taking to a teacher) was introduced in the vedic times and in the time of Manu it was fully developed'. "The boy", we see, "wears an antelope's skin, lets his hair grow long ; he collects fuels, begs, learns and practises penance."

He lived with his teacher for 12 years and sometimes even 32 years. The regulations that are laid down in Manu chapter II are minute and seem to be the results of long experience. How careful they were in bringing up their

young girls who were not educated in the way followed in the case of boys, yet they also were carefully brought up ! [कन्याप्येवं पालनीया शिक्षणीयातियत्नतः], says Manu. i. e. A girl also should be carefully brought up and trained in household duties. Though girls were not invested with the sacred thread, they were purified by the other sacraments performed on their behalf. (Manu 11, 66). The disciplinary education of girls was not neglected.

> "Some of them must have received sound religious education as we find the names of lady Rishis like Ghosha (a princess), Apalá, Lupámudrá, Viswábará, the last performing sacrifices"*

If we study the *Brihaddevata* of sage Saunaka, we shall learn much therefrom about the education of women in ancient India. The education of the Kshatriyas of later times e. g. of the Pandavas under Dronacharyya and of Rama and Lakshmana under Viswamitra was mainly in arms and weapons, though the Vedas also formed a part of their education. Even in the Rig-Vedic days, it seems, "physical and military training was not neglected." As they had to fight against their enemies whom they subdued and ousted from the fertile valleys of the rivers,

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* (A. C. Das.)

it is clear that they were great fighters, though in the well-developed society of the days of the Epics, when caste system was perfectly organised, the warrior class was assigned the duty of fighting and defending others as well as of ruling them.

Though the scheme of education as given in chapter II of Manu Samhita was mainly intended for the Brahmins, and Manu is most anxious about the spiritual part of a boy's culture, yet in Chapters VII, VIII & IX he has given us quite adequate ideas as to the culture that other castes, the Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras should attain. The king should be also acquainted with the Vedas (VII, 26). He is to be thoroughly versed in Sastras (VII, 28). Manu regulates every duty in the life of all castes and classes as carefully as one might expect in a monastery or convent. All European writers have expressed admiration at the serious and careful manner in which life was conceived and regulated. Here culture did not mean simply memorising certain *mantras* or injunctions. It meant regulating the whole life and discipling it according to certain customs and ceremonies for the purpose of moral and spiritual welfare of man. The whole community was an organism, the different castes being its different limbs. Inspite of the caste system,

the lowest classes were considered parts of the body politic. Only in ancient Rome the 6th King Servius Tullius seems to have conceived society as an organism like Manu and assigned to the lowest and poorest classes certain duties and certain privileges.

The method that was followed here was essentially one of introspective realisation of truths that the student observed in the external phenomenal world. They certainly used their senses for the purpose of observing the changes going on in the world of nature and appreciated the *lila* (works) of God as manifest therein, but the student had to practise Dhyan or meditation from the very boyhood. In Manu Samhita Chapter II, we read of various injunctions about the pupil's practising repeating the Gayatri. In repeating the Gayatri one has to withdraw his thoughts from the surrounding universe and concentrate them on the Inner Guide who directs them. A boy, who cultivates this habit of concentrating his mind on the Inner Guide of the heart, will surely acquire a tendency to meditation or to perform Dhyana. 'The greatness of the Indian sages of old was due to this habit of calm and deep thinking. They dived deeper into the realm of the soul than people did elsewhere. They had ample opportunities for observing

facts with their senses, but they were more anxious to realise the meaning of the facts more thoroughly. They were more intent on the final causes of things and not on the phenomenal causality alone.

In the modern educational methods, observation and experiment have acquired greater importance. The teacher is to train the senses of his pupil and develop his instincts by giving a free play to them. Thus freedom is another slogan in the modern art of teaching, Rousseau, Locke, Spencer and other great authorities have insisted on the teacher following the nature of the boy. The teacher is to develop the natural powers of the pupil and give him freedom in using his senses. It is not that freedom was not given by the Rishis to their pupils in studying nature and in following their inclination, but they laid greater stress on restraint. The tendency of the senses or Indriyas is outward. They always divert our attention to the external world. The Rishi therefore says :

पराञ्चिखानि व्यतृणत्स्वयम्भू
स्तस्मात् पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन्
कश्चिद्धीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्ष
दावृत्त चक्षुरमृतत्वमिच्छन् ॥ (Katha II. 1. 1.)

[God has made our senses tending outwards. Men therefore are anxious for the world of

perception, and not inclined to see the soul. The wise, therefore, turn their eyes inward and seeking immortality there see God.]

From this it is quite clear that they realised the need of controlling the senses. In their educational system they were more anxious to realise the soul and to enable the pupil to know God. Hence they laid greater stress on the control of the senses : The Gita says :

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे राग द्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ-

तयोर्नवशमागच्छेत् तौह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥ (III. 34.)

[The senses having liking for and disliking to the things of nature should not be our masters. They are great obstacles in the path of the Sadhak.]

In the modern educational systems the creed of restraint and meditation has not been properly recognised. Europeans who are ruling the roost in the world of activity and thinking, have not as yet realised the importance of the introspective method. Our educated people, their pupils, also, have forgotten the old methods, and are very enthusiastic about the new methods. The new methods are welcome, but they are not and should not be the substitute for the old methods. The method of observation must be supplemented by the methods of restraint and

meditation. In our anxiety for the body, we should not wholly forget the soul, the seat of all authority for us. The very psychology of the modern educationist is at fault. The European psychology that locates the mind in the brain and looks upon the brain as the only root of man's soul or mind does not satisfy us. There was a different psychology known and understood in India. Even now there are adepts who study this psychology and acquire a complete mastery over the senses. In order to understand the trend and tendency of the Indian system of culture, we have to take a glance at some of the broad principles of the psychology of the Rishis, as also of their metaphysics. Their metaphysics led them to the realisation of the fundamental unity in the universe and that unity was a spiritual one. Their psychology also was in harmony with this metaphysics, and they believed the soul to be the real seat of authority in man. We shall see in the next chapter what were the main principles of their psychology.

CHAPTER III

HINDU CONCEPTION OF THE RELATION BETWEEN THE MIND AND THE BODY

The Hindu psychology is a key to the understanding of the Hindu system of culture. Unless one understands what the ideas of the Rishis were as to the relation between the mind and the body, and what they considered to be the soul of man, it will not be possible to see the reason why they laid so much stress on it ;

The following verses from *Kathoponishad* (III. 10-12) indicate, in brief, the ideas of the Rishis as to how the mind and the body were related :

इन्द्रियेभ्यः पराह्यर्था अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः ।
मनसश्च पराबुद्धि र्बुद्धेरात्मा महान् परः ॥
महतः परमव्यक्तमव्यक्तात् पुरुषः परः ।
पुरुषान्न परं किञ्चित् सा काष्ठा सापरा गतिः ॥
एष सर्व्वेषु भूतेषु गूढ़ात्मा न प्रकाशते ।
दृश्यते त्वग्रयया बुद्धया सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥

This passage indicates that the Rishis considered the perceptions gained by the senses as superior to the sense-organs; the mind as superior to the sense-perceptions (the mind uti-

lises them for objectification). The power of understanding or *Buddhi*, again, is superior to the mind. This *Buddhi* may be identified with the discriminating reason in man. The self of man is superior to this reasoning power. This self of man or *Mahat* is derived from *Prakriti* or *Abyakta*, which is therefore superior and this *Abyakta*, is inferior to the *Purusha* (the Oversoul). This *Purusha* is the final authority over all. He is the universal soul and pervades all things. The wise and acute-minded people see him with their eye of discriminating intelligence.

The Gita also confirming this analysis says :

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्य परं मनः ।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिः बुद्धेपरतस्तु सः ॥ (III. 42).

i.e., the mind is superior to or above the sense organs ; the *Buddhi* or discriminating understanding is superior to the mind ; and the self of man is superior to *Buddhi*.

Again, as to the relation between the individual soul and the soul of the universe, the following verses from the *Mundakoponishad* may be quoted !

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्योऽभि चाकशीति ॥ (III. 1)

Two birds friendly to each other are perching on the same tree (the human body). One of the

two (the human soul) enjoys the sweet fruits (the results of the activity of the man) and the other Friend (the divine Soul) looks on. Again, the same Upanishad states that man by identifying himself with the body feels weak and suffers from sorrows and miseries, but when he realises his oneness with the divine Soul, he escapes all griefs. (See *Mundaka* III. 2). As to the superiority of the mind over the sense-organs, the Gita again says :

श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनञ्च रसनं घ्राणमेव च ।
अधिष्ठाय मनश्चायं विषयानुपसेवते ॥ (XV. 9)

i. e. The mind enjoys the things of this world by subordinating the ear, the eye, the touch, the tongue and the nose to itself.

The *Kenoponishad* puts the idealistic theory of the knowledge of the external world very clearly :

केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः
केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः ।
केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति
चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति ॥

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यद्वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणश्चक्षुषश्चक्षु
रतिमुच्य धीराः प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति । (1-2).

The mind is sent to the objects of the senses by the self of man ; this self, again, is enabled

by God to utter words. He employs our eyes and ears. This Divinity is the Eye of our eyes, Ear of our ears; the Power of speaking in us; He is our soul and Life of our lives. The wise by realising Him, escape death and attain immortality. Lest some people identify Him with the limited world of time and space, the Gita states that the world of Gunas cannot exhaust him.

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये ।
मत्त एवेति तान्विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥ (VII. 12).
त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्व्वमिदं जगत् ।
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥ (VII. 13).

[The natures that are harmonious, active, and slothful—Sattvic, Rajasic, Tamasic—i.e., those in whom one of the three qualities, Sattva, Rajas or Tamas, predominates,—these know as from Me, not I in them, but they in Me.

All this world, deluded by these natures made by the three qualities (Gunas) knoweth not Me, above these, imperishable. (Dr. Beasant)]

Hence He is in the senses, but exceeds them; He is the active principle in the mind, but exceeds the mind; we utter speeches through his help, but speeches cannot express him; the mind cannot conceive him; He controls the mind, but the eye cannot see him, but he enables the eye to see.

Hindu psychology is thus idealistic and traces all knowledge to one source, God. It therefore leads us to the method of introspection as a better source of knowledge, though it does not deny the existence and help of the external world. As it traces the existence of all thoughts and sense-perceptions to one source and one personality, that personality monopolises all attention. The sense-organs have their value for this life, but this life is a transitory phenomenon, whereas, the originator of all things is the all important Reality. The Rishis realising the importance of this Reality, gave themselves up to prolonged meditation, being forgetful of this world. Therefore we have already characterised this civilisation as soul-centric.

The 'Ego' again in the individual has been identified with the divine soul, ("तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो").
The Rishis considered the mental phenomena as well as the operations of nature as works of the Gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and as such mechanical: The Gita indicates this in the following verses :

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्व्वशः ।
अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥ – (III. 27).

[All actions are wrought by the qualities (Gunas) of nature only. The self, deluded by

Egoism—Ahankara—the separate 'I am,' thinketh : 'I am the doer.' Dr. Beasant.]

The Rishis realising this mechanism in nature, warn us not to identify our 'I' with this mechanism.

They conceived of the self of a man as existing in three levels or planes *i.e.*, the vital or animal, the mental or intellectual and the psychic or soul or spiritual level. The vital and the mental planes are in constant touch with each other. As soon as a desire is felt in the mental plane, it is carried out by the sense-organs. The sense-propensities are located in the vital plane and emerge into the mental as desires. Thus there is a constant ascent and descent between these two planes. The sense-propensities work under the guidance of the mind. The lower Ego of the mental plane is thus practically identified with the senses, the passions and the emotions. The Tantric Yogis farther say that the sexual desires and propensities remain subconscient in the region below the navel, round about what they call the Muladhar Padma and the Swadhistan Padma. These propensities surge up to the mind-plane of men of unrestrained nature and make havoc of their emotions and feelings. When people refer to

their selves, it is these 'I's in them, with their emotions and passions that they mean.

In good men the psychic plane or the spiritual 'I' controls the lower two planes. When flashes of love, goodness, justice, mercy and other higher tendencies of the soul take place on the lower planes and they are actuated, good works are done and the lower 'Ego' being purified from the base fleshly propensities of selfishness, greed, avarice etc. is ennobled and identified with the higher spiritual self in man. The animal self of the vital and the mental plane predominates in most people, but when the desires and impulses are curbed by the higher soul plane asserting its will power, an act of delivery takes place. With good men and women who are always inclined towards higher life, heaven is ever present. It is this 'I' of the psychic plane that is immortal and is referred to in the Gita (II. 12-20) as incapable of birth and death and free from the ills that may overtake the body. The body or the vital plane is destructible. The mental plane is the purgatory where purification should take place.

The actions of the desires and emotions are mechanical and can be controlled only by long practice. Hence the Gita says, "अभ्यास वैराग्याभ्याम्." i.e. you can control the lower planes only by long protracted practice of restraint and by

giving up all desires. In the Hindu mode of culture the checking of the desires is the most important point. All sins arise from unregulated and uncontrolled desires. The 'Ego' of the lower plane with desires is the most deadly enemy, the Devil or the Ashura described in the Purans. Srikrishna therefore exhorts Arjun to overcome and control this demon of the animal self.

जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो, कामरूपं दुरासदं (Gita, III. 43)

[Conquer, O ye of strong arms, this deadly foe of desires.]

Hindu adepts, therefore, cultivate Yoga in order to quell all desires and establish the Swaraj of the spirit over the mind and the body. The lower self being purified and sublimated by the practice of meditation on God and by the control of the lower planes, one gets visions of the *Paramatman*. It is then only that one will understand the meaning of the great sayings, "तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो" (Thou art that, Swetaketu) and the noble verse in the Exodus (III. 14), "I am that I am." European psychology has not as yet clearly analysed this "I am", and pointed out the difference between this 'I' and the individuality on which European writers base their ethics and politics, and the individuality which they have developed since the days of Socrates.

Neither have they clearly pointed out how knowledge becomes possible. They are performing experiments and demonstration as regards the 'I' of the material and mental plane, which they consider as a modification of the process of cerebration. This individuality is now-a-days very strongly assertive and is evident in the progressive democracy of Europe. All the upheavals in the history of Europe, whether social, political or religious are due to the assertion of this individuality and is causing great bloodshed and unrest. We also are asserting it and are passing through the same troubles. Where we shall be led by the working of this 'Ego' of self-assertion, God alone knows.

The clear analysis of the Hindu psychology shows how to sublimate the animal self for the purpose of establishing a permanent union between the spiritual self of the higher plane with the self or 'Ego' of the lower plane. "विहाय कामान सर्व्वान् य पुमांश्चरति निस्पृहः"—i.e. we are to do our work, giving up all desires. This psychology emphasises the need of introspection and meditation as a better method for attaining knowledge. The methods of experiment and observation of the phenomena of nature were not neglected by our Rishis, who saw the *lila* (play) of God in

nature, but they were more charmed by the beauty of the realm that is limitless and that is realisable in deep meditation. They gave themselves up to the practice of Yoga, which is still the most peculiarly Hindu mode of *Sádhaná*, *Bhakti* and *Karma* are the methods for all, but the Yoga system is the method which even now maintains the peculiarity of the Hindus.

This method is based on a thorough knowledge of the human nature and is therefore called the *Jnan Marga*. The Gita has distinctly implied the superiority of this method in the following verses :

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते
प्रियहि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च ममप्रियः
उदाराः सर्व्वे एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मेमतं
आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम्
बहूनाम् जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते
वासुदेव सर्व्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः VII. 17-19.

[Of these the wise constantly harmonised, worshipping the One, is the best ; I am supremely dear to the wise, and he is dear to Me. Noble are all these, but I hold the wise man as verily Myself ; he, Self-united is fixed on Me, the highest Path.

At the close of many births, the man full of wisdom cometh unto me ; Vasudeva (a name

of Srikrishna as the son of Basudeva) is all, sayeth he, the Mahatma, very difficult to find. Dr. Beasant.]

The pursuit of knowledge or *Jnan* leads the Hindu Sadhak ultimately to the practice of Yoga, which has been beautifully developed in the *Tantras*. The Rishis laid down the lines of the introspective method, which being developed by the Buddhist monks and Arhats ultimately has attained perfection at the hands of the theistic Tantric Sadhaks. These Tantrikas have not deviated from the teachings of the Upanishads, but have, it seems, perfected the introspective methods of the Rishis and drawn beautiful conclusions from the psychological analysis indicated in the *Katha, Kena* and other Upanishads. The *Oitareya Upanishad*, for instance, has another beautiful analysis, in addition to what we have got above. It is the analysis of the whole human nature into five Koshas or Sheaths. This analysis does not go against the former one. It divides our self into five concentric sheaths called the Annamaya, (the fleshly coil); the Pranamaya (the vital sheath); the Manomaya (the mental including the feelings, desires etc.); the Bijnanamaya (the sheath of understanding, intelligence, reason etc.); and the Anandamaya (the Sheath of pure joy—

the sheath where God resides). The first four sheaths of this analysis may be identified with the two planes, viz., the vital and the mental and the psychic with the last sheath.

When the Sadhak lives in the first four sheaths, he leads the life of an ordinary man. It is only in Yogic meditation that he can realise the joy by realising which one escapes the fear of death. "आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् न बिभेति कुतश्चन", when one realises the joy of *Brahman*, he loses all fear, including the fear of death. This is the attainment of immortality. There is an unending peace and ineffable joy in that union of the human soul with the soul of the universe.

In the sixth Chapter of the Gita, its author has indicated in a general way the method of Yoga and he has followed the psychology of the *Kathaponishad*. In order to attain Yoga one must practise concentration in a lonely place, withdrawing his senses from their pursuits (VI. 10-13), and assuming certain postures of the body. There are rules regulating the diet, sleep etc. which need not be quoted here. The main point is to be absolutely desireless. Patiently and with complete renunciation of all desires, one has to concentrate his thoughts on the soul and see all things in God and God in everything. (VI. 30), and thus be in an unending touch and

union with God. In this way one will gradually transcend the world of sense perception and under such condition *Kripa* descends to lift up the Sadhak. When one thus earnestly and sincerely seeks him, he gets touches :

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि, स च मे न प्रणश्यति (Gita, VI 30).

("Of him I shall never lose hold and he shall never lose hold of Me.") Withdrawing of the senses from the world of sense-perception is called the *Vyatireki* (Indirect) method. According to the *Anvayi* (Direct) method, one has to realise the finite things as existing in God, the Infinite, and concentrate all attention on Him. Ultimately both methods lead us to God. The one suits the Bhakta and the other the follower of knowledge, Educated people sometimes feel a preference for the Yogic method.

In the old educational system the Rishis taught their pupils to practise Dhyan from the earliest age of eight or nine, In repeating the Gayatri one has to withdraw his mind from the phenomenal world and concentrate all the thoughts on the Inner Guide, who directs all our thinking. Our pupils in modern times use their senses to make observation and to perform experiments. We require to combine both methods, viz, that of concentration of the mind on the

soul as well as that of observation of the world by using the senses.

The restlessness that our students are exhibiting imitating the examples of the west and following the western methods have their utility. The spirit of freedom that they exhibit in their conduct and character also has its use and abuse. Yet the traditional methods of the Rishis have value for us, because we have an affinity in our soul with the souls of the Rishis and there is some chance that by reviving their method of introspection and control (*Brahmacharyya*), we may acquire some more depth in our thinking and some more genuineness in our ways of life. We are growing bad copies of Europeans and are losing the capacity of even understanding the truths that our ancestors discovered. We have an intellectual and spiritual heritage and unless we follow the methods of old, we shall not be able to understand what heritage has been left to us. We must adapt everything new we learn to our old inheritance and assimilate it with our own things; otherwise the modern education will avail us little.

CHAPTER IV

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY

Max Muller has called us a nation of philosophers and praised us as such, because he says life is not worth living, unless one indulges in dreams like those of the Hindu Philosophers. His actual wards are :

> "If they were not philosophers, let them be called dreamers of dreams without which life would be hardly worth living."

If we go into the enquiries which the Rishis concerned themselves with, we cannot but accept this bold defence of Max Muller. They enquired even in their earliest musings into the origin of things. They searched for the maker of this universe and enquired into their own relations with Him even in the Rig Veda. I may quote a few words from Max Muller in this connection.

> "The same human yearning for one supreme deity which led the vedic priests to address their hymns to Visva-Deva or to Visvakarma as the maker of all things induced them likewise to give a more personal character to Prajapati".

The depth of the Hindu enquiry can hardly be compared with that of other races. True, the Hebrews and the Egyptians also started such search after the Maker or Creator, but were easily satisfied ; neither were they so introspective. The Greeks also philosophised, no doubt, on the origin of things. but their philosophy did not attain that greatness that was attained here. If we compare "the Hymn to the unknown God" translated from the Rig Veda by Max Muller with the famous hymn of Cleanthes, the stoic philosopher, to Zeus, we shall see the difference, The Rishis worshipped Him in their sacrifices and believed Him to be the origin and creator of all things ; Cleanthes also was a Rishi, no doubt, but he did not so fervently seek Him. In India philosophy and religion were intimately associated, but with the Greek and Roman philosophers, philosophising did not influence life so fully and deeply. In the literature of the Hindus there is a persistent and the most earnest effort which continued throughout their history until the six famous system were developed, and this did not mean that the enquiry stopped there. The commentaries that have been written on these systems and the commentaries on the commentaries and the new systems of the Bengal *Nyaya* as well as the Buddhistic and Jaina

systems prove the virility of the Hindu mind. The pity of the whole thing is that we are becoming M.A.'s in philosophy and call ourselves professors of philosophy without knowing anything of this greatest philosophy that the human mind has invented. Dr. Winternitz, in his "History of Indian Literature", says :

> "For the historian, however, who pursues the history of human thought, the Upanishads have yet a far greater significance. From the mystical doctrines of the Upanishads one current of thought may be traced to mysticism of the Persian Sufism, to the mystical theological Logos doctrine of the Neo-Platonist and the Alexandrian Christian down to the teaching of the Christian mystics Eckhart and Tauler and finally to the philosophy of the great German mystic of the nine-teenth century, Schopenhauer."

Any one who with an open mind will enquire into the different systems of philosophy will come to acknowledge the superiority of the Hindu philosopher with whom philosophy did not mean intellectual gladiatorship for intellectual glory and satisfaction, but the fundamental pursuit of life, without which life had no meaning. The Rishis could never feel happy, however deep might be their search, until they felt sure that they realised Him. In the Vedic hymns we

see their search and in the Upanishads we find their realisation. In the Rig veda X. 129. 1. as translated by Max Muller the following occurs:

> "There was then neither what is, nor what is not; there was no sky, nor the heaven which is beyond. What covered? Where was it, and in whose shelter," etc.?

Again in the hymn, ascribed to Rishi Dirghatamas (Rig Veda, 1. 164. 6), the Rishi hesitates to call Him either a male or a female; neither is he satisfied with calling Him Prajapati or Visvakarma, and so calls him "*Tad Ekam*", "that One, who is neither male nor female. that is, as neuter." If we compare this hesitation with the mantras "पितानोऽसि" (Thou art our father) "पितानोबोधि" (teach us as our father) etc., we feel that the author has arrived at a greater certainty. Rishi Yajnavalkya of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, who advised his enquiring wife Maitreyi, dissatisfied with worldly possessions, because they could not give her immortality, by telling her to devote herself to the realisation of the soul (आत्मा वा अरे श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः) must have come to a greater certainty than sage Dirghatamas. Evidently, the Hindu theistic enquirers did not stop, but continued most earnestly until they arrived at the most assured realisation, so that they saw Him as real as the *amalaka* fruit

in their own hand. So the Rishi exultingly declared.

तमीश्वरानां परमं महेश्वरं ।
तं देवतानाञ्च परमञ्च दैवतम् ॥
पतिं पतीनां परमं परस्ताद् ।
विदाम देवं भुवनेशमीड्यम् ॥ (श्वेताश्वतर, VI. 7)

[I have come to know that God who is the Lord of all lords, powerful agents working in the universe ; who is the greatest among the gods ; who is the most powerful over all other powerful beings and who lives beyond all darkness.]

As I confine myself to the ancient ideals, I do not refer to the *Tantras* in which I think there are many practical directions about exercises and disciplines connected with system of Yoga, which Indian Sadhaks more surely followed as the path of God-realisation. There are even now great adepts in the Yogic practices by which they can help the aspirant along the path of realisation, These are things which can be learned from the Guru alone, though books can give some help. How positive and certain he is that he has known the Lord of the universe. The Rishis had an assured faith in God, whom they realised as the life of their lives and the soul of their souls.

तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां शान्ति शाश्वती नेतरेषां क

(Katha, V. 13)

[Those who know him in the soul attain permanent peace].

This was the result of their philosophising. Every man, they opined, must philosophise for himself. Hence the Hindu, inspite of his belief in incarnations, Guru and other helps, such as, revelations, has to exert himself, if he is to attain a real religious life. There is no end to the sects among the Hindus and they welcome all teachers and pay homage to them all.

Even to-day our Pundits are known as philosophers of the different schools. Unless a man has been able to secure a title in one system, at least, he is worth little.

As the Vedas are still regarded as the greatest repository for all religious truths and wisdom, and the study of the Vedas is considered as the most imperative duty, philosophising as well as the study of all other subjects is regarded as a means to an end. It was for the purpose of understanding the Vedas that our ancestors used to study other subjects. The six systems were developed with the Vedas as the centre. They accepted the Vedas as their authority and wrote their systems as helpful to the understanding of the Vedas. All praise was given to the

students and interpreters of the Vedas: neither could the sacrifices be properly performed, if the Vedas were not correctly understood. Great importance was attached to correct pronunciation and hence followed the importance of grammar also. Arguments and discussions were necessary for grasping and clarifying the meaning. Thus from the necessity of understanding the Vedas and doing the sacrifices properly were developed the philosophies, grammars, etc. Philosophers were to supply the arguments for understanding the *mantras* and as help for attaining salvation of the soul from passions and the evils amidst which man found himself. Manu, for instance, says that "one who employs his arguments in consonance with the Smritis and the Vedas will be able to understand the meaning of true religion. but not others. (XII. 1. 6). Hence the philosophers employed their arguments in agreement with the revealed books, the Vedas and the Smritis. They did not apply their arguments quite freely, but had to argue in accordance with the revelations made by the Rishis. We, however, now-a-days cannot accept these limitations to the freedom of a philosopher. A modern philosopher will be guided by his own reason and experience. Though they thus depended on the Revelations,

yet they exercised their ingenuity fully. They employed three methods in their enquiry :

प्रत्यक्षं चानुमानञ्च शास्त्रञ्च विविधागमम् ।

त्रयं सुविदितं कार्य्यं धर्म्मशुद्धिम् अभीप्सता ॥ (Manu, XII. 105)

[i. e. Experience, guesses, as well as the lessons of the Sastras were the data in understanding true religion]

They felt also the necessity of associations and co-operation among the learned. A Parishat, for instance, would be helpful, if it contained men of varied learning :

त्रैविद्यो हैतुकस्तर्की नैरुक्तो धर्म्मपाठकः ।

त्रयश्चाश्रमिणः पूर्व्वे परिषत् स्याद् दशावरा ॥ (Manu, XII. 111)

[A Parishat should contain the following classes of persons : Men knowing the Vedas, men clever in *anuman* or guessing truth ; men clever in arguments, men clever in grammar, and in understanding meaning of words ; pupils engaged in the study of religious books, men practising Brahmacharyya ; householders, men who have retired from the world into the third Asrama].

From all this we cannot but give them the credit of the greatest possible earnestness in their enquiry. A Brahmin did not care for the so-called happiness of life ; even for Vishnuloka

or Sivaloka. They did not seek even the position of an Indra, but were anxious for realising the soul :

अयन्तुपरमोधर्म्मो यद योगेनात्मदर्शनं

[Realising the self is the essence of religion]
[*Yajnavalkya Samhita*]

The different systems of philosophy, the Buddhist and Jaina systems also were written for the purpose of ascertaining the essential truths of life, though their ways or *margas* for attaining salvation might be different. Puspadanta puts it thus :

रुचीनां वैचित्र्याद् ऋजु कुटिल नाना पथ-जुषां
नृणाम् गम्यस्त्वमसि एक: पयसामर्णव इव ।

[Thou art alone the destination for all, though the paths may be different, straight or curved, according to people's peculiar temperaments ; just as all rivers ultimately fall into the sea.]

All Hindu philosophers accepted this proposition that *Tattvajnana* or attainment of truth would secure salvation. True knowledge was considered as the best means for attaining salvation.

"तमेव विदित्वा अ'तिमृत्युमेति नान्य:पन्था: विद्यते अयनाय ।"
(श्वेताश्वतर: III. 8.)

[Knowing God alone was the means of attaining Salvation and there was no other way.]

The falsehood or illusoriness of this world could not otherwise be fully realised except by

attaining *Tattvajnana*. When one attains the knowledge of truth, he gets rid of the attachment to this false world. In order to acquire true enlightenment one has to understand the truths revealed in the Vedas by thinking and arguing and then fix the mind on the true self.

"श्रोतव्यः श्रुतिवाक्येभ्यो मन्तव्यो चोपपत्तिभिः ।
मत्वा च सततं ध्येयः एते दर्शनहेतवः ॥"

[One has to hear the Vedas and learn truths therefrom, think over them with the help of arguments and then concentrate his thoughts constantly on the truths. These are the methods for attaining truths.]

Only philosophising in an academical way as is done by our university professors will not do. One must realise the truths ascertained by arguments and live up to them and make them one's own so as to destroy the *Avidya* or false knowledge that creates attachment.

This habit of philosophising and making philosophy the main object of culture has led to other very desirable results. The intellectual powers were sharpened and thought clarified. The different system of Logic of Gautama and other older philosophers and the *Navya Nyaya* of Bengal prove the greatness of the Hindu intellect. Thus the intellectual powers were sharpened, and

having applied them to the study of other subjects, they attained greatness in them also. The Hindus were householders and required to study other subjects. Medicine, Music. Astronomy, Astrology, Mathematics, Chemistry, Metallurgy, even Kámasástra, Moral Sciences, Poetics, Phonetics *etc.*, they studied. The fineness of the Hindu intellect is demonstrated in every subject they studied. Patience which Homer calls the best gift of the gods to man was the greatest characteristic of the Hindu and it is patience that enables man to attain depth of thought.

Hindu philosophers have been charged with pessimism, as they all have considered this life as full of misery and called the world an illusion. The Vedanta calls Avidyá or nescience the cause of man's misery ; the author of the Sankhya system begins with an account of the *Tritáp* and *Triyantraná*, three kinds of troubles. He calls the cause of sorrow Aviveka or want of discrimininition. The true-self is not discriminated by people who identify themselves with their bodies. The Nyáya System assigns all misery to Mithyajnana or false knowledge from which all bonds or *bandhanas* follow. The Buddhist and the Jaina systems also find the world full of misery, as the results of men's previous *karma*. They all, therefore, begin with *dukkha* or pain of man ; so the

Buddhist Moksha is Nirvan or *dukkhanta* ; relief from all bonds and misery. Any thoughtful man, however, after he has attained certain age and experience of life and realised the transitory character of mundane things, name, fame, wealth etc., will come to the same conclusion as our ancestors, whose long experience and the thorough grasp of the value of the so-called enjoyments of life made them look upon this life as more unhappy than happy, "दुःखमेवातिरिच्यते" (sorrows predominate.) They found *dukkha* as exceeding happiness, and as desire can hardly be fulfilled, they concluded that desires or *Tanha* or *Trisná* were the source of troubles. All religious people, not only here, but in Europe also during the middle ages, looked upon this life as miserable and called the world "a vale of tears" This was a conclusion that was forced on them by their experience. People are now busy in the race for happiness and are madly pursuing sensuous gratification ; and hence they have no time to think calmly. They are too realistic and live in the level of the senses. They thus fail to understand the viewpoint of Hindu philosophy.

But it is not pessimistic. It is the most optimistic that man has ever discovered. It is not hopeless about the future. It holds out hopes to the worst sinner, though he will have to pay the

penalty. It does not believe in eternal hell, and tells every man that God dwells in his heart, and every man can work out his salvation. He has not to seek for any external aid, and though helpless, the greatest help is available for all. "आत्मैव आत्मनो बन्धु आत्मैवरिपुरात्मनः" says the Gita.

[Your own self is your greatest friend as well as the worst enemy.]

Max Muller says :

> "If therefore all Indian philosophy professes its ability to remove pain, it can hardly be called pessimistic in the ordinary sense of the word. Even physical pain, though it cannot be removed from the body, ceases to affect the soul, as soon as the Self has fully realised its aloofness from the body ; while all mental pain, being traced back to our wordly attainment, would vanish by freeing ourselves from the desires which cause these attachments. The cause of all suffering having been discovered in ourselves, in our works and thoughts, whether in this or in a previous existence, all clamour against divine injustice is silenced at once."

Does not the Hindu belief in *karma* provide a much more rational view of the sorrows and inequalities than the BOOK OF JOB in which Job, a devout believer, does not accuse God, but is

silent, when his friends charge him with misdeeds as the cause of his calamities, and protests merely that he is sinless in his life? Hindu philosopher believed man to be responsible for his own troubles and recommended methods of relief that were more self-reliant. If *karma* be the cause of misery, *karma* will liberate you. Hence the Hindu has been more just and conscientious in his dealings. He has been "अधर्मभीरु:" or afraid of unrighteous conduct. Hindu philosophy, specially the Vedantic system by showing the ways for realising God in every individual soul, has been the most hopeful philosophy in the world. It is not the vague rationality of the Stoics, many of whom committed suicide out of despair at the iniquity of man, nor abstruse and thus useless for the common people like the philosophy of Plato, but it has, through the teachings of many saints and teachers reached the man at the plough, so that even a village peasant is in search of the "*manermanush*" (the man in the mind). The *Baul sangits* that we heard as children in the village home chanted by our farm-hands still ring in our ears for the deep significance they echo still. The peculiarity of the Hindu culture is that through its instrumentality the deepest lessons of philosophy have percolated to the lowest

stratum of society. Bengal Vaisnavism, which has many repulsive features, no doubt, in the eye of the superficial observer, has propagated the highest religious truths among 'the common' people, so that they play with these 'golden balls', so to say, and the Hegellian philosopher, if he is appreciative, will recognise his unity in difference in the 'songs of the village cowherds. The cowherd knows as a matter of experience the duality between himself and the Lord of the Universe; at the same time he knows that the Lord of the universe is in his soul, singing and playing on his flute and asking for the love of his worshipper. If one goes to Brindaban he will see how the ideal of Radha pervades the atmosphere of that holy place, where every one considers himself or herself to be a Radha. The echoes of "Radha" "Radha" are heard on all sides. This is how philosophy has been brought down from the Himalayan heights to the level of the man at the plough.

CHAPTER V

CONTRIBUTION OF THE HETERODOX SYSTEMS, *viz.*, BUDDHISM AND JAINISM TO INDIAN CULTURE

Indian philosophies have been divided into two groups, *astica* and *nastic*, theistic and atheistic. Those philosophies that subordinate their reasonings to the teachings of the Vedas belong to the former group. The Purva Mimansa and the Uttara Mimansa or the Vedanta, the Sankhya, (though denying God), Patanjali's Yoga system, the Nyaya and the Vaisheshik of Goutama and Kanada, accepting the authority of the Vedas are considered as of the former group. According to another definition, we may include the Buddhist and the Jaina systems also under this group, as they also believe in the survival of the soul of man after the dissolution of the body. But as these two systems deny the authority of the Vedas, they are called *nastic* by some and they are excluded from the category of Hindu philosophies. Hindu philosophers, again, call those *nastic* who do not believe in a future life,

such as, the followers of Charvak. The Kathaponishad, alludes to such people thus :

न साम्पराय: प्रतिभाति बालं
प्रमाद्यन्तं वित्तमोहेन मूढम् ।
अयं लोको नास्ति पर इतिमानी
पुन: पुन वंशमापद्यते मे ॥ (2nd *volli*, 6th *sloka.*)

(Yama or Death tells Nachiketa : Thoughtless people and those who lack the power of judging right and wrong, being blinded by their love of material things, think that it is only this world that is a reality and the next world a mere figment of the imagination. It is these people who become my victims, again and again.)

The Gita also refers to such people in the following verses.

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठन्ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरम् ।
अपरस्परसम्भूतं किमन्यत् काम हैतुकम् ॥ (Gita, XVI. 8.)

(The universe is without truth, without basis, say they, "without a God, (Ishvara or the ruler of a universe) ; brought about by mutual union, and caused by lust and nothing else.")

—Dr. Beasant.

The Buddhists and Jainas cannot be included in this category, because their systems, though not subordinate to the Vedas and not believing

in a personal God, were not inconsistent with the highest ideals of love and sympathy; on the contrary, they surpassed the theistic systems of the day, by their human love and compassion for the afflicted. The Gita refers to people who were absolutely lawless, because they did not care for right or wrong.

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुरा।
न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥ (Gita, XVI. 7.)

(People devilish in their nature do not make any discrimination between what should be desired and what eschewed; neither care they for bodily or mental purification or sanctifying customs; they do not adhere to truth either.)

So in these two *slokas* the author of the Gita characterises men who were no better than beasts and were mere incarnations of the Devil. There are even now such gross materialists who aim at nothing but sensuous enjoyment and are wholly unscrupulous. The Buddhists and the Jaina teachers, therefore, may be included in the category of *astica* people. Their philosophies, on the contrary, have employed reasoning, not in subordination to the Vedic Revelations. We do not as yet clearly know how much we owe to the teachings of these two great systems that were so highly intellectual and ethical, as

their systems have not been properly studied. The orthodox Pundits do not care for what they have left written in Pali and we who have got modern education and a little wider sympathy care less for the Indian philosophy itself. It is only recently i. e, during the last half a century or so that European scholars are trying to understand these systems. The little that we have come to know of these two systems we owe, mostly, to the labours of European scholars. We have seen already how diligent and earnest the Buddhist teachers were at the monasteries. A large part of these literatures, it seems, was destroyed when the monks were massacred and their monasteries sacked by the Islamic invaders. Those who fled to southern India and Nepal carried some of the books along with themselves, and hence some rare books have been discovered by European scholars in the libraries of the kings of Nepal and Mysore. We should now try to learn the truths taught by the followers of Gautama and Mahavir from other lands, such as, Ceylon, Burma, China, Japan, Siam, Tibet, etc., where Buddhism was propagated and wherefrom pilgrims came here to learn the truths of Buddhism. Knowledge of Chinese and other languages of the Mongolian group will be very useful for working in this field of Buddhist

literature. But we have become incapable of such earnest love of truth under the new system of culture that is now predominant.*

Yet I shall, try to say what I have been able to understand as to the contribution of the Buddhist and the Jaina system of thought. The question, "what made the religion of Buddha, though without a God, so widely acceptable to mankind," has not yet been satisfactorily answered. Mr. R. C. Dutt in his history of Ancient India makes an attempt and says that it was the equality of all men and women that Buddha preached in this caste-ridden land of ours that made it so welcome to the people.

> A touching story is told in the *Theragatha*, which enables us to comprehend how Buddhism came like a salvation to the humble and the lowly in India and how they eagerly embraced it as a refuge from caste-injustice. * * * *
>
> Who can read this touching story of humble Sumitra's conversion without realising the loving spirit of equality which was the soul of Buddhism and which ensured its success ?
>
> *Ancient India, Vol. I, p. 351.*

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* We gladly note that our Calcutta University has made arrangements for teaching Chinese, Tibetan, etc. to some scholars, recently.

But this answer does not provide an adequate explanation. It is very doubtful if this religion was so largely accepted by the lay people here. Many became monks and joined the Sangha, no doubt, but being an ethical cult of self-reliance and self-control, it did not spread very widely before the days of Asoke. Asoke did much for propagating his faih and just as now-a-days Hindu audience congregate to hear Christian missionaries or Hindu reformers, speaking against castes and other bad customs, but do not give up these condemned things ; similarly, they of the olden days paid homage to the new truths propagated by their emperor but continued performing the Vedic rites and ceremonies. There was no compulsion employed for converting people, excepting the moral influence of the example of the king, i.e., Asoke. The ethical teachings, however, must have deeply influenced the life and thought of all intelligent classes, because in the Upanishads themselves we see that people were losing faith in the efficacy of rites and ceremonies. The Gita condemns the "पुष्पिता: वाच:" of the "वेदवादरता:" people. (attractive words of those who were devoted to the Vedic rites). In the Ishoponishad itself the Rishi says :

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यां उपासते ।
ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्यायाम् रताः ॥ (Isha 9)

[Those who devote themselves to Vedic rites enter into darkness and those who give up these rites, following crass reasoning, enter into deeper darkness.]

The Vedic age itself spread over thousands of years and the Rishis had multiplied the ceremonies enormously, and made them complex. So that, now trained Brahmin priests became indispensable for their due performance and the priestly profession became lucrative. This must have led the lay people to doubt the efficacy and the spiritual value of the Vedic mode of worship and Yajnas. Among the Rishis themselves, those who were serious and earnest came to realise the inwardness of religion and as they, in the earliest stages, had conceived of God as pervading the universe and gave him such names as Visvakarma and Visvadeva etc.; they who composed the celebrated hymn of Baruna had no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that he is in the heart, "गुहाहितं गह्वरेष्ठ". The deeper truths of the Upanishads, however, cannot be supposed as being widely spread among the common people. They remained confined to the elite, to kings like Janaka of Mithila and Ajatasatru

of Kashi, and to the teachers and advanced students of the different schools of Brahmins. Even the mass of Brahmins knew very little of the deeper truths of spiritual life. We must not forget that the preservation of life and of the race is an absorbing business for most people, and human nature is the same almost every where and in all times. Out of the twenty four hours of the day not even half an hour we can spare for spiritual exercises. They also, in this way, were busy with their wordly pursuits. It was moreover a 'bookless' world. All lessons had to be learned from the Guru and for that one must live with him. Every boy of the higher castes was duty-bound to be placed under the care of a Guru, yet most people were satisfied, as they are now, with a modicum of culture. There are Brahmins now who can hardly recite the Gayatri, though they may be quite sensible and respectable people. Hence the common people were not acquainted with any higher truths than those taught in the hymns or Samhitas, the Vedangas, the Sutras, such as, the *Grihya Sutras, Kalpa Sutras, Srauta Sutras*. And as the language was gradually becoming unintelligible, many perhaps could recite them like parrots, without understanding a syllable of the Vedas. Are not most Brahmins incapable of understanding the

Gayatri, though they recite it daily ? I am afraid that not one in a thousand can grasp the meaning of the Sandhya Mantras that they chant thrice a day. Very few priests even to-day understand the meaning of the *mantras* by reciting which they perform the *poojas* (worship) of the various gods and goddesses. Similar must have been the extent of understanding even among the ancients. Hence the great importance attached to the understanding of the Vedas. There was only one man, Sayana, who dared to write a gloss or commentary on the Vedas in the 14th century. If many people had the capacity to do so, there would have been more commentaries. Therefore the necessity of a new message in an intelligible language was keenly felt.

When Buddha and Mahavir flourished in the sixth century B. C., deep enquiries were being made by the learned into the nature of the soul. Many systems of philosophy flourished, though ultimately, later on, only six systems came to be compiled by the orthodox thinkers. These were, according to European scholars, written long after Buddha was dead, just as the Pitakas were compiled at least two hundred years after the Nirvan attained by Buddha. Buddha's world was 'a bookless one', says Mrs. Rhys Davids and though the earliest Upanishads, such as *the*

Brihadaranyaka, the Kausitaki, the Chandyogya, were composed about the 6th century, yet they were committed to writing afterwards. If the opinion of the European scholars be correct, that writing was unknown in India before the fourth century B. C., it is the greatest wonder that the Brahmins could have composed such vast literatures, as *the Vedas, Brahmans, Sutras* etc. and memorised them so carefully and accurately as not to alter a syllable. *The Brahmans*, moreover, were in prose. Is it not miraculous that these prose things they could learn by rote and remember so correctly? Buddha and Mahavir also became teachers and preached to appreciative disciples the truths they had discovered. Gradually these disciples multiplied and the well-known orders of monks and nuns came to be founded.

Mrs. Rhys Davids says that at the time when Buddha came, there was an activity going on in the world of the elite. People were in search of a new message and the message came. The Vedas had taught the need of the rites and ceremonies; had taught of various gods, and last of all had taught the higher truths of monotheism and *Brahma Jnan.* Yajnavalkya and others had propagated the greatness of the human soul in which the Brahman is manifest. Yet none had yet

been able to say *what the man in every* man was. I may quote the words of Mrs. Rhys Davids :

> "The message made a singular appeal, a strong appeal, the appeal of a supply to a demand ; the response to something waited for......Man does not respond to an appeal which is not to his inmost self. When he does respond, he has, perhaps unawares, been seeking it. The worder is one to whom the "man" in men pays instant heed".

She again puts the following in the mouth of Gautama in her book, "Gautama, the Man" : "As philosophy my teaching should count as this, the worth of life lies in man's will in choosing the better ; not in man being a nothing. As religion my teaching should count as this ; the life of man is a way through the worlds to the goal, and not a going out into not-life. Worthy will my teaching appear when once this is made clear." Elsewhere he is made to say :

> "For me the very man, 'the I' changes, because he is ever in process of becoming, of coming to be what he is not."

So what he taught had not been in the atmosphere. He pointed out a new meaning in every one's life, Man is not to merge himself, as Yajnavalkya teaches, in the Brahman, but to consider his life as a stage in his eternal be-

coming and changing for the better, and for this he is not to perform any priestly rites or to perform Dhyana, but to exert his will power for overcoming the desires. He is to choose for himself what he is to do. Man becomes thus a wayfarer, a chooser, a dynamical entity and not a statical soul. Every man has got a man within himself and this man is a wayfarer. Everything in this world is governed by the law of causation and the will power in man can cause the bettering of every man.

Prof. Renan in his "Life of Jesus" has acknowledged the influence of Buddhism on the teaching of Jesus.* One thing in connection with the ethical attitude of Gautama needed to be noted and it is this. All other ethical systems of thought, such as, Zoroastrianism, Judasim, Christianity or Islam base their teaching on a philosophy of dualism. Zorothustra, for instance, teaches that Orhmuz and Ahriman are in eternal feud; similarly in the Mosaic system, God and

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* "The interchange of ideas in the human species does not operate solely by books or direct instruction. Jesus was ignorant of the very name of Buddha, of Zoroaster, of Plato; he had read no Greek book, no Buddhist *Sutras*, yet notwithstanding there was in him more than one element, which, without his suspecting it, emanated from Buddhism."

Satan are eternally hostile to each other. The gulf between good and evil is unbridgeable. In the teachings of Gautama no such external source of evil is posited. In the man himself there are good and evil propensities and he is to choose the right ones. The eight fold path is thus stated :

> "Right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right endeavour, right smriti and right concentration. Now this very midway course, well understood by the man so gone, making vision, making knowledge leads on to peace, to wisdom, to enlightenment, to Nirvan." *

Is not this teaching as to the will power in man for choosing the better or right path a clearer statement than the theory of Conscience as taught in western ethics? A great controversy now prevails among different schools of philosophers, if there be any such thing as freedom of the will. But if instead of looking at the question thus theoretically, we consider it after Buddha, from a practical stand-point that man as a doer, or a willer, chooses for himself, the controversy will appear as a needless waste of words. Buddhism has come to be identified with inactive

* Mrs. Rhys Davids.

meditation, but this was not what Buddha taught. He knew the value of Dhyan or *Jhana*. "I greatly valued *Jhana*, but only as a help in seeking guidance from the Unseen. What worth can it be truly said to have had otherwise for man in my teaching ?" One who believes in such guidance cannot be characterised as a godless man. In fact, being utterly truthful as he was, he could not maintain that he had exhausted all truths. His teachings when handed down orally must have been changed by the monks and such a big system as it developed unto, later on, cannot but be full of inconsistencies. He did not care for any gods, but himself was made into a god and is now worshipped as an incarnation. He was not responsible for introducing the custom of begging for the monks, as in his times there had already been the Jaina monks, who were known for their severe penances. The orthodox Brahmins also in the third and fourth Asramas were *Paribrajakas*, maintaining themselves by begging. Even Kings begged, when they abdicated for retiring into the later Asramas. The Brahmacharins, or the pupils under training ,with the Rishis, also had to beg for themselves and their teachers. Thus the custom of begging had been developed along with the system of culture and religious life from

the Vedic age. So when the followers of Buddha and Mahavir also become religious mendicants, none questioned their right to beg. No doubt there were men, here and there, who ridiculed these idlers for neglecting the professions to which they were born, but as the people, merchants and industrial classes, were rich, nobody grudged to give them charity. The state of the country in the days of Buddha, as well as, afterwards, as described by Yuan Chuang, appears to have been very rich and flourishing. "The inhabitants of Benares, for instance," he says, "were numerous, their houses being full of rare valuables and boundless wealth,"

Buddha considered himself as a helper to others and his companions, such as Shariputta and Muggalina and others also never assumed the role of any superiority to those whom they undertook to teach. Just as a man going on a journey or wayfaring is glad to have guidance and companionship, similarly they were ready to provide guidance or help. Thus they developed their system of service, which they organised for man's help. They went afterwards throughout the world and lovingly served others. Buddha saw that emphasis was being laid on man's action and activity, both by Vardhaman or Mahavir and the orthodox teachers also and thus

man was becoming an 'actor'. He also therefore emphasised man's will and activity in his teachings. His religion thus developed afterwards into a greatly active force for the regeneration of man. Everywhere the monks proved to be a source of enlightenment and purification of man's life, as they insisted on controlling the desires. They were not satisfied with giving advice, but the monasteries were centres of culture, where they earnestly devoted themselves to the pursuit of knowledge. In the *Vinaya Pitaka* we read of the rules and regulations that disciplined their lives. Though some of the rules may seem ridiculous to us, yet we shall have to admire them for the great care with which they provided for the smallest wants. How vigilant they were as regards all sorts of lapses and with what reverence they followed the injunctions left for them by their Master? They paid the greatest reverence to the old and experienced and though their community was a republic, there was no oppression of the majority over the minority. They began the first woman movement in the world by founding the custom of allowing women to join their orders. Women did not enjoy such equality among the orthodox people, and though Buddhism declined in India in eight hundred years or so and the monks

became corrupted and lazy in their lives, yet if we compare them with the Christian monks of the Dominican or Franciscan orders, who became corrupted in three to four hundred years, we shall have to admit that their pursuit of *Jnan* or knowledge kept them purer for a longer period. Arhatship that came to be their ideal held out before them a very concrete example of self-culture and it is this noble ideal of *Jiban Mukti* which still exercises a healthy influence on the lives of Buddhist priests. It was the Buddhists who, for the first time, established hospitals for men as well as beasts and helped people in other ways. In Burma even now the Monasteries are centres of culture. and in China up to the recent times there was a deep love of learning, and culture was very widely spread. Great respect was paid to the learned men and in the government of the country preference was shown to the best educated people in making appointments for state service. Buddhism has thus been a great force for the moral and intellectual progress of mankind.

CHAPTER VI

THE INTER-RELATION AMONG THE THREE-FOLD IDEALS OF HINDU CULTURE

There is a distinct and clear grasp, in the Hindu Sastras, of the relation among the three-fold ideals of *Jnana* or knowledge, *Bhakti* or devotion and *Karma* or work. Padmanabha, the author of the Gita,* who was a man of deep culture and wide sympathy has introduced into his book, which is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, a beautiful and complete scheme of culture, in which he has shown the connection among the three *margas* or ways and incorporated in the three sections, or Shatkas of six chapters each, the different views of the different schools of adepts in religious exercises. There is a harmony, at the same time, among the three

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* गीता सुगीता कर्त्तव्या किमन्यैः शास्त्रविस्तरैः ।
या स्वयं पद्मनाभस्य मुखपद्मात् विनिःसृता ॥

[One should sing the Gita well. What is the use of many Sastras ? The Gita has come out from the mouth of Padmanava himself. According to some Pundits this Padmanava was a great Rishi, and must not be identified with Bishnu.]

disciplines, a "समन्वय" or harmony which seems to have been his aim to establish. The great popularity of his book is really due to this attitude of harmony that is impressed upon the most careless reader.

In fact in the Hindu mode of Sadhana, since the earliest time, we find that attention was paid to all the different modes of exercise. The Rishis composed hymns in praise of and supplication to, their gods and were anxiously curious about the nature of the god or gods they worshipped. Thus the sacrifices that were performed, and [they may be considered as the symbol of *Karma*] the spirit of devotion felt, the gratitude expressed for the blessings received, and the enquiries made as to the relation between the worshipper and the worshipped, all these made up a harmonious combination of *Jnana*, *Bhakti* and *Karma*. As gradually their enquiries acquired deeper and deeper significance and they realised their own spiritual nature in relation with the spiritual greatness of the god worshipped, the simultaneous pursuit of all the different modes gave way, perhaps, to exclusive '*sadhanas*'. Men who were intellectually inclined and preferred meditation to the external activity of chanting *mantras* and pouring libations and offering oblations, must have depreciated the ritualistic com-

plexities. They, as a matter of course, felt the need of deeper thinking or Nididhyasana, like Yajnavalkya, who says :

"आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः"

[The soul, my dear, is to be seen, to be heard, and to be meditated upon].

Men averse from thinking and of active habits, again, finding pleasure in eating, drinking, etc. must have found the rites and ceremonies, as they grew complex, day by day, not only to be a means of livelihood in their performance, but appealing to their own temperament. Men of loving and softer nature, feeling grateful to the gods from whom the boons were daily coming, bowed down in reverence and did not mind, if the complex ceremonies were accurately performed or the *mantras* correctly pronounced, because they believed that it mattered little whether you said "Visnave" or "Vistave", if the heart really was filled with devotion, because Janardan (God) is "Bhavagrahi" (cares for the feeling). "Thus these three modes came to be a little differentiated, according to the temperament or status of people. This is known in our Sastras as "अधिकारिभेदः' Though the caste system was not a hindrance at first in the way of men's culture, because no member of higher castes was debarred

from acquiring knowledge of the Vedas, * yet as life grew complex and professions and pursuits were specialised, all people even of the higher classes cannot be supposed as being very anxious for Vedic knowledge or other intellectual pursuits. Thus differences came to be created. Men of the priestly classes and intellectualists among others were in favour of *Jnana* or knowledge, other people were, as a matter of course, in favour of ritualistic *karmas*, that were performed by trained priests, on the payment of *dakshina* or fee ; or of devotion which does not require intellectual acumen or deep meditation. Men, who were interested in multiplying the ceremonies, derived profits from the growing complexities of the sacrifices and sacraments. Thus came the *Brahmanas*, the *Sutras* and the *Smritis* to be composed.

"Worshipping the gods, the Brahmins, superiors and men of learning" ("देवद्विजगुरु प्राज्ञपूजनं") came to be essential in the cult of *Bhakti*. Those who preferred meditation and were not much in touch with the performance of the ceremonies,

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* According to some Pundits the *Sudras* that were barred from the study of the Vedas do not exist now. The so-called Sudras of to-day have every right to read the Vedas, as even *Mlechhas* are becoming great teachers of the Vedas.

e.g. the Kshatriya kings, such as, Janaka or Ajatasatru, began to enquire deeper and deeper into the nature of the soul and were the compilers and composers of the *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads.* Both Vardhamana or Mahavira and Gautama also were Kshatriya thinkers and gradually came to condemn the sacrifices that involved the slaughter of animals and ritualistic *karma.* They found the conventional code of *karma* enforced by the Brahmin supporters of caste privileges, as of little worth in developing man spiritually and thus they began to preach the principles of ethical *karma* or works that tended to the amelioration and spiritual betterment of men and women. In this way different *margas*, or in the words of the author of the Gita, Yogas, came to be distinguished and adopted and worked out by different castes and classes.* As they were all more or less earnest in their pursuits and lives, some rivalry and clash of opinion must have taken place, though the differences did not make them intolerant. Max Muller quotes in his "Six Systems of Hindu Philosophy", an account which clearly demonstrates the

* According to Pandit S. N. Tattvabhushan the Rajarshis (kings like Janaka and others) were deeper and more practical inquirers than the Brahmarshis (Brahmin teachers of the Upanishads).

tolerant attitude that was a general characteristic of the followers of different *margas*. The paragraph is this :

King Harsha while going to meet a sage Divakara leaves his followers behind and walks with a few of them.

> "While still at a distance from the abode of the holy man, the king perceived a large number of Buddhists from various provinces perched on pillows, seated on rocks, dwelling in bowers of creepers, lying in thickets, or in the shadow of branches, or squatting on the roots of trees,— devotees dead to all passions, Jainas in white robes (Svetambaras), with mendicants (Bhikshus Paribrajaks) followers of Krishna (Bhagavatas), religious students (Brahmacharins), ascetics who pulled out their hair, followers of Kapila, (Sankhyas) Jainas, Lokayatikas (atheists) followers of Kanada (Vaisheshikas), followers of the Upanishads (Vedantins) believers in God as a creator (Naiyaikas), ... Students of legal institutes, students of the Purans, adepts in sacrifices requiring seven priests, adepts in Grammar, followers of the Pancharatries and others besides, all diligently following their own tenets, pondering, urging objections, raising doubts, resolving them, giving etymologies and disputing, discussing and explaining most points

of doctrine and all this, it would seem, in perfect peace and harmony."

The author of the Gita who has milked not only the cow of the *Upanishads*, but churned the ocean of the whole Hindu literature has considered the arguments of all the parties and at last indicated his preference. Most commentators have failed to appreciate his catholic and ingenuous attitude and been puzzled by his so-called repetitions, inconsistencies and contradictions in the three *Shatkas* of his book. But really he has given the views of the different schools of spiritual adepts.

One way of considering the three *margas* is that they suit different status or temper "अधिकारिभेद:", and by different persons the three disciplines are to be adopted. Another way of considering these as exclusive methods is that *Jnan* will suffice or *Bhakti* will suffice or *karma* alone will do, and no other method need be resorted to. The *Jnanabadins*, for instance, will say:

श्लोकार्द्धेन प्रवक्ष्यामि यदुक्तं ग्रन्थकोटिभिः।
ब्रह्म सत्यं जगत् मिथ्या जीव ब्रह्मएव केवलं॥

(I shall tell you in half a line of a *sloka* that Brahma alone is true, and the world a falsehood, and illusion. What is the need of consulting crores of books ?)

The followers of *Bhakti*, again, say that "नाराधि-यदि हरिस्तपसा ततः किं' (नारद पञ्चरात्र:) But there are others who say that though *Bhakti* or *Jnana* may be the last method to be resored to, to begin with, the other two methods are to be utilised as help. The defenders of the four Asaramas will maintain this view. You begin with *Jnana* as a student, then as a *grihasta* or house-holder you follow *karma* (both ritualistic as well as ethical) and then retiring, you follow ritualistic *karma* and Dhyana and in the last stage give up all *karma* (कर्मसन्यास: as well as फलत्याग:), though in the third stage there was no कर्मसन्यास: but फलत्याग: alone.

Thus *Jnan*, was pursued with different ideals in view. The Vedantins of the different schools, Adwaitavadins and the Visistadwaitins aimed, either at merging the self in the *Brahman* or realising the *Brahman* as a personality, not forgetting one's own individuality. This is the "भेदाभेदवाद:" (unity in difference) of the school of Ramanuja. The followers of Sankhya again, also were pursuers of knowledge. They meant by *Jnan* 'प्रकृतिपुरुष विवेक:' Nature must be distinguished from the transcendent Personality. *Mukti*, according to them, is freeing the self of the man from the bondage of *Prakriti*. So "मोक्षसाधन" willl require you to liberate the self from desires

and all dualities. These Sankhyas were not advocates of sacrifices. The author of the Gita partially approves of the method of the Sankhyas. The followers of Buddha also largely practised the principles recommended by Kapila.

[सुख दुःखे समे कृत्वा—Gita] "Making comforts and discomforts the same", and similar Stoical principles are really the teachings of Kapila. These dualities are the effects of nature. The soul of man is not affected by the dualities. Thus the Vedanta and the Sankhya both advocate *Jnan*, ultimately as the sole means of liberation. The culture they recommended did not care for *karma* or *Bhakti* paid to gods.

The supporters of *Bhakti* ("एकान्ति भक्तिः") attach all importance to *Bhakti* and demand complete self-surrender. In such a state of mind there is little room for ritualistic *karma* or ethical *karma*. When Gaurango was madly wandering in search of Krishna, after his exit from Navadwip, what rites or ceremoniss he cared for or what humanitarian work you might expect from him ? This sort of absolute devotion is the only realisation they care for and hence the followers of "प्रपत्ति मार्ग" *i. e.* people who have realised God give up *karma*, and *Jnan*.

The author of the Gita, however, who seems to have a great sympathy with the Buddhists

as well as the followers of the Vedas, begins his first Shatka of six chapters, stating the principles of *karma*, in the third chapter, as he believes both ritualistic and ethical *karma* as necessary for purification. In the first two chapters, he gives us the background or the setting of his poem and then Arjun who has come to feel the narrowness of the caste or conventional duties is made to say that the sentiments of love are higher and he won't fight. Krishna then first gives him the philosophy of the absolute and proves by Sankhya and Vedantic principles that death, birth, all these are unrealities and man's agency is illusory. He appeals also to the common sense and the code of honor of a soldier. Thus fortifying Arjun by *Jnan*, he gives him the highest principles of *karma* in the third chapter. He tells him frankly that *karma* must be done without your caring for the fruit ("निष्कामकर्म"), and out of a sense of duty. You cannot attain "नैष्कर्म्य" without doing *karma* (Gita III. 4). He thus perhaps expresses his disapproval of the Buddhists' rejection of all ritualistic *karma*, because he believes :

यज्ञदानंतपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् (Gita, XVIII. 5)

[Sacrifices, charity, penances, etc. lead to the purification of the wise].

He illustrates his principles by citing the example of Janaka (III. 20). His arguments in support of *karma* are most convincing. His views on *karma* are wide, so he says :

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीर यात्राऽपि च ते न प्रसिद्धेदकर्मणः ॥ (Gita, III. 8)

[You cannot maintain your body unless you do work].

He surely condemns the mendicanay of able-bodied people, who gave up *karma*.

There are other schools, however, of the exclusive followers of *Jnan*, *Bhakti* or *karma*, who instead of considering the other two modes as helpful avoid them as harmful. Certain schools of Vaisnavas condemn *Jnana* and *Vaidik karma* : The followers of *Jnan* similarly condemn *deva-puja*, sacrifies, etc., as needless and harmful waste of time and energy. Defenders of the Vaidik customs, who are called Sanatanists, again, condemn those who give up the rituals and they do not believe that in that sort of *Bhakti* as is practised by Udasins and others there is any meaning. Hindu attitude is clear?in support of this view and it thus accounts for the disappearance of Buddhism from India.

The author of the Gita, in the first section or Shatka, by emphasising *karma* gradually

shows the need of *Bhakti* (IV) and *Jnana.* (V & VI). He propounds the theory of incarnation (IV. 7.8) and supports caste (IV. 13) and again says (IV. 19) that *karma* has to be done. As it is not easy to understand what is *karma,* it is safer to do the duties imposed by birth, giving up all selfish motives, out of a sense of duty. Thus by beginning with an emphasis on *karma,* he points out that the discipline of *karma* is to be supplemented by *Bhakti* and *Jnana.* In the 5th chapter, he again summarises the relation of *Jnana* and *karma* and says that it is fools who consider them as antagonistic (V. 4). He supports here the views of those who favour "समुच्चयवाद:" or Eclecticism. In the Svetasvatara Upanishad this Eclectic Movement, which combines the Shankhya Yoga and Vedantic teachings, had been anticipated and *karma, Jnana* and *Bhakti* harmonised. Take, for instance, VI. I., in which the Rishi says :—

स्वभावमेके कवयो वदन्ति
कालं तथाऽन्ये परिमुह्यमाना: ।
देवस्यैष महिमा तु लोके
येनेदं भ्राम्यते ब्रह्मचक्रं ॥

[Some learned people, through error, consider Nature ; others again, consider Time, as the cause of the universe. But in the universe the

greatness of God is manifest by which the *Brahmachakra* or the universe is being moved, i. e. through the power of God the universe is going on"]

Again in chapter VI, the slokas 3 and 4 of the *Gita* say that after having done the works to which men are led by the *gunas*, they are to concentrate themselves on the soul. The Gita of Padmanabha is famous for the "समुच्चयवादः" or Eclecticism. In the Gita the supreme Being incarnate is Krishna, who expounds to Arjuna this doctrine in this sense. The burden of his teaching being that the zealous performance of a man's duty is the most imperative task, whatever caste or creed he may belong to. He holds *Jnana*, *Bhakti* and *Karma*, all mutually helpful; and they are to be followed at the same time. In following *Jnana*, you better your *karma*, as well as *Bhakti*, because *Jnana* improves *Bhakti* as well as *karma*; *Karma* similarly will clarify your *Jnanu* and *Bhakti* and *Bhakti* again will deepen your *Jnana* and make you more zealous in your *karma*. Practically modern educated and devout people hold this view of "समुच्चयवादः." In the 6th Chapter he explains how in view of deeper knowledge, a man may become (VI. 4) "योगारूढ़" (established in Yoga) and how such a follower of *karma*

(VI. 9) attains a universal love for all. Then he points out the method to be followed for self-realisation. Evidently the author prefers *Jnana* as the final step. It is by *Jnana* that one attains "जीवन्मुक्तिः" (VI. 22).

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः

[By attaining which a man considers no other gain as worth having].

In the other two sections, he, similarly, begins with an emphasis on *Bhakti* and *Jnana* respectively, and then traces their connection with the other two disciplines of *Jnana* and *karma* in the 2nd Shatka, and *karma* and *Bhakti* in the 3rd Shatka. It is not necessary here to go into the details of the chapters. It suffices to say that in the three sections, he practically teaches the same lessons, viz, the necessity of following all the disciplines. One may begin with *karma* another with *Bhakti*, another with *Jnana*. But if he is to attain salvation (*Moksha*) he should not neglect any of these methods. His personal view seems to be one of "समन्वय" or harmony, but one may begin with emphasis on one method. As these three methods are dependent on the three faculties of the human mind knowing, feeling and willing; and the man is not to be identified with any of these three, he

will derive benefit using these three methods, though ultimately he will have to attain "ब्राह्मीस्थिति" or realisation of one's self in the bosom of God. Really the culture that is indicated by the religious literature of the Hindus seems to be one of harmony among the different disciplines. Hindu *Bhakti*, *Jnana* and *karma* can attain perfection only on this condition. The current mode of education being a practical and intellectual culture will result in dwarfing the whole man. The intellect cannot attain the full development without the cultivation of *Bhakti* and *karma*. Our educated people are therefore imperfect as compared with their ancestors. An intellectual deterioration seems to have set in in Bengal.

There are other methods of combining and considering these three disciplines, They, according to some, are organically connected "(अङ्गाङ्गीभावः)" ; If you neglect the one, the two others will suffer. Another view is that they are parts of the same whole and not only interconnected. Any how the full scheme of "Mokshasadhana" is a harmonisation of all these three. Hence the life of a householder has been regarded as the most convenient Asrama or stage in which one may practise all the three modes, and thus acquire a perfection like Janaka and Yajnavalkya. The

custom of retiring into the forest, after the attainment of the age of fifty, may have lost its significance in recent times. Neither can we suppose that even formerly all people did it. Now-a-days many aspire to die in the harness and there is an injunction in *Parasara Samhita* that one may go on earning until he lies dead in the cremation ground. The struggle for existence and desire for worldly success and pleasures are becoming keener and keeping people too busy to think of retirement. The spiritual note in the Hindu life will seriously suffer at the hands of the present generation by this materialistic spirit imbibed from the European education. The democratic movement inaugurated by the French Revolution has worked for the last one hundred and fifty years for the uplift of mankind, no doubt, but it has injured man spiritually. How we are to adapt the new ideals to our old *margas* and moorings is the central problem of our education.

CHAPTER VII

THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE OR *JNAN* IN ANCIENT INDIA

We have already seen, both in the first chapter as well as in the chapter on the method of education followed in ancient time that the Rishis pursued knowledge as a means of attaining "मोक्ष' or liberation. They pursued the various sciences in seeking after truth, no doubt, yet they considered empirical knowledge as *Apara vidya* or inferior knowledge and that knowledge by which one might come to know God as *para-vidya* or superior knowledge. ("सापरा यया अक्षरमधिगम्यते") There is a beautiful story in the Chhandogyopanishad (Part II. Chapter VII. Part I. 1-2) which tells us that Narada, the celebrated Rishi, one day visited Sanat Kumar as a humble disciple to learn from him how to realise God, as he was feeling very unhappy, though he had mastered all the sciences that were known to his contemporaries. * On Sanat Kumer's

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* अधीहि भगव इति होपससाद सनत्कुमारं नारदस्तं होवाच यद्वेत्थ तेन मोपसीद ततस्त ऊर्ध्वं वक्ष्यामीति. (Narada appearing before Sanat Kumar said, "My Lord, teach me". The latter replied,

asking him what he had learned, Narada replies "I know the Rig Veda, sir, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda, as the fourth the Atharvan, as the fifth the Itihash Puranas (the Bharata); the Veda of the Vedas (grammar), the Pitraya (the rules for the sacrifices for the ancestors); the Rashi (the science of numbers); the Daivam (the science of portents): the Nidhi (the science of time); the Vakovakyam (Logic); the Ekayana (ethics); the Devavidya (Etymology); the Brahmavidya (Pronunciation-Siksha, ceremonial, Kalpa, prosody, *chandas*), the Bhuta-vidya (science of Demons); the Kshatra-vidya (the science of weapons); the Nakshatra-vidya (astronomy); the Sarpa and Devajana-vidya (the science of serpents, or poisons, and the science of genii, such as the making of perfumes, dancing, singing, playing, and other fine arts. All this I know, sir. (S. B. E.)

Inspite of this encyclopædic knowledge Narada says that "with all this he knows *mantras* only, the sacred books, but he does not

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"Tell me first what you know; then I will teach you something more). सहोवाच ऋग्वेदं भगवोऽध्येमि यजुर्वेदं सामवेदमाथर्वणं चतुर्थमितिहास पुराणं पञ्चमं वेदानां वेदं पित्र्यं राशिं दैवं निधिं वाकोवाक्यमेकायनं देवविद्यां ब्रह्मविद्यां भूतविद्यां क्षत्रविद्यां नक्षत्रविद्यां सर्पदेवजनविद्यामेतद्भग वोऽध्येमि । २ ।

know the Self, and he has heard from men like Sanat Kumar that he who knows the Self overcomes grief: "But he is in grief and he implores Sanat Kumar to help him to overcome this grief." *

This is the spirit in which knowledge was cultivated. They were free from conceit and vanity, as there was no limit to the knowledge one had to acquire and none could feel self-satisfied. When knowledge is pursued with the object of knowing God, one will be eternally anxious to know more and more. Such seekers after knowledge were not anxious to cry down others. They were helpful to others as they themselves sought help. Some of them lived with their Gurus long periods of thirty-two or forty-eight years; some the whole life. So serious was their search after knowledge, as their object was the highest possible. All the sciences were included in their curriculum and they were anxious to learn from all sources. How eagerly they learned from all sources! How eagerly they learned from foreigners is well-known to the students of Indian culture. Thus the motive

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* सोऽहं भगवो मन्त्रविदेवास्मि नात्मवित् श्रुतं ह्येव मे भगवद्दृशेभ्यस्तरति शोकमात्मविदिति ; सोऽहं भगवः शोचामि तं मा भगवाञ्छोकस्य पारं तारयत्विति तं होवाच यद्वै किंचैतदध्यगीष्ठा नामैवैतत् । ३ ।

that underlay the cultural efforts of the people of ancient time was the greatest and purest. Every well educated person among us also will admit that a disinterested pursuit of knowledge or knowledge for the sake of knowledge should be the inspiring motive of every genuine student, yet there is a difference between the outlook of the people of ancient time and that of us, the moderns. They were great believers in God and a future life and they considered this life as a passing phase : This made them more idealistic and earnest and more anxious for enlightenment. They sought *Moksha* or *mukti* (salvation) by knowledge ; we seek truth and some fame and some reward and recognition. Not only knowledge they sought as a means of salvation, but the other objectives of life, 'धर्मार्थं काममोक्षचतुर्वर्गं' (Social life, pursuit of wealth, satisfaction of desires) also they pursued, in accordance with certain injunctions and regulations, laid down on that behalf, for the purpose of attaining *Mukti*. * Their whole-life with all the activi-

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* The ritualistic duties to be performed by a householder required money and money was required for the satisfaction of the desires of a man and one is purified by Karma and by the satisfaction of desires, and thus attains or becomes fit to attain "मोक्ष" or *mukti* (salvation).

ties and efforts tended to one object. Whatever Sastras they invented and composed, whatever truths they sought, they had this main object in view. The Dharmasastras as the *Kalpa Sutras*, the *Srauta Sutras*, the *Grihya Sutras* as well as the various *Smritis* prove that whatever rules and regulations guided them in their acquisition of knowledge, in following their professions, in distributing their properties among their heirs, in the Samskaras and sacraments they observed, the duties the various castes had to perform for the preservation of the community—all had a spiritual object in view. At the same time it must be noted that they were not a lot of unpractical enthusiasts. They always were observant of the environments of their lives and adapted themseives to the circumstances that changed from time to time.

In reference to this practical wisdom of the Rishis. Prof. Keith, in his "History of the Sanskrit Literature", remarks, while writing on "the Arthasastra" of Kautilya :

> "The Arthasastra made known to us in 1909, is unquestionably one of the most interesting works in Sanskrit, because it affords a vast amount of detailed information about the practical side of Indian life as opposed to the spiritual, and while in parts it covers ground touched on in treatises

on Dharma (he means the Smritis), it does so with a wealth and accuracy of details which is completely other than the often vague generalities which are the stock-in-trade of these texts."

In order to appreciate the justness of these remarks it is necessary to go through the contents of the book which will convince the most carping critics that the Hindus of old were not a lot of dreamers, only pouring libations into fire and indulging in spiritual trances, from whom it was so easy for the practical western people to snatch the crown. History refutes such inferences, at every step, if we know how to read it aright.

Though we are reluctant to enter upon any historical discussion in this connection, yet we cannot but refer to one incident to illustrate our point of view, and Prof. Keith also, we find, corroborates it. We hold that Alexander withdrew from India without making any attempt to enter into the interior parts, not on account of heat, which subsides in the Punjab in the month of November, when he went away, but on the ground of expediency and prudence, which induced him to return with his fame intact, instead of risking it in a fight with the central power of which he must have heard from Chandragupta, who had visited him in his camp. He had gathered

considerable experience of the pertinacity and heroism of the Hindus of those days in the various frontier kingdoms through which he had to fight his way. A careful perusal of the battles fought by him as given in Vincent Smith's "Ancient India", will convince the most superficial reader that his experiences directed him aright. Had he survived long, an insatiable conqueror as he was, he might return with a vaster army. Prof. Keith corroborates this explanation of the withdrawal of the Macedonian hero, in a way, in the following remarks :

> The Vedic Literature, permeated as it is with religion, affords a quite false impression of the Vedic Indian as a person given to reflection and religious practices without regard to practical life. Nothing, of course, can be farther from the truth ; the East, in lieu of bowing low before the West in disdain or otherwise, confronted Alexander with an obstacle which he did not attempt to penetrate, and his garrisons had soon after his death to be withdrawn. If we are to judge India aright ; we must add two other objects to the Dharma, religious and moral duty which is dwelt on in the Vedic text. Already the Hiranyakeshi-grihya Sutra knows of the three objects in life, Dharma, Artha, Politics and Practical life in general and *kama* or love."

The ideal of "मोक्ष" or *mukti* was gradually developed and afterwards considered as the main object in life. But they developed these three first. In no other country did people so systematically analyse the motives of life and determine their mutual relations so logically. Is not love a great motive in life ? Our Rishis realised its importance and developed a science of eroticism which even now commands attention throughout the world. *The Kamasastra* of Vatsayana is a book highly appreciated in Germany and other lands.

The main idea to be remembered and thought upon in this connection is that the Rishis neglected nothing that life required and devoted their attention to discover truth in all things. They had no false delicacy or false moral ideal to follow, but sifted truth from everything they came across, though religion was the chief motif of the drama of their life and the human soul the protagonist. Even in pursuing the positive sciences, such as, Geometry, Astronomy, Medicine, etc., they were religiously inspired. Hence Prof. Keith says ;

> "In India, at any rate, science, Sastra or *vidya*, arises in very close connection with religion."

It is for this reason that even the medical science is considered as a Veda or Panchama

Veda and the professors of it also were great Rishis. Their anatomical studies began with the dissection of the animal slaughtered at the sacrifices.

We are to take life as a whole, just as in the Vedic days, and study all branches of knowledge as a means of the enlightenment of the soul, as well as a means for improving the mode and outlook on human life. Money or "अर्थ" is a good thing, when wisely utilised for the alleviation of the wants of this life, whether of the legal owner or friends and men at large. Love we do not reject like the Buddhist monks, but utilise it as a means of self-culture or moral elevation and purification, and it may become, when properly pursued, itself a sort of self-realisation or the realisation of God. Love and service seem to be the religion of God, who loves and serves us all. Let us also love and serve each other.

With our ancestors philosophy was the highest study to be pursued and perhaps the greatest amount of attention was paid to this enquiry. Though we are no authority on this subject, yet may unhesitatingly assert that we are still proud of this achievement of our ancestors and we have very little to learn as regards philosophical truths excepting the modern

methods that are more helpful in understanding our old treatises.

If Europe wishes to understand the significance of the soul, she will have to learn it from India. Though in ancient time almost everywhere people followed an encyclopædic ideal in their education, it was a more earnest pursuit with our ancestors. Our revered grandfather used to recite a *sloke* to the effect that an educated man must know the "four Vedas, the fourteen Sastras (Dharmasastras), Nava Vyakaran (nine Grammars) and Eighteen Puranas." Why the philosophies are not mentioned in it, is difficult to say. Perhaps this *sloke* does not consider philosophy as a separate branch of learning, in as much as in the Vedas themselves are included the Upanishads and even in the Rig Veda itself there are philosophical musings : In India religion and philosophy are not opposed as yet for the properly educated people, though the followers of Chaitanya and some other *Bhkati* cults deprecate the knowledge of philosophy.

Max Muller and other admirers have called us a nation of philosophers, using that word in a good sense and not in a depreciatory meaning. Really even in the Rig Vedic days they tried to understand the reason of everything from a common sense view of things, and were not

satisfied with creating beliefs,like other primitive races, in certain totems or genii and spirits.

The ancestors of other civilised races, such as, the Hellenes, the Hebrews or the Romans followed certain lines of thought that made them more observant of the external facts of nature or of their national history. Their metaphysics has been dualistic and hence they were not so introspective. Our monistic philosophy made our ancestors more meditative and introspective. Here our ancestors, though they in their Vedic hymns, appear to be quite alive to the facts and perceptions realisable by the senses, gradually developed an inwardness of vision and an introspective method of enquiry that made them more meditative than others. Though they took thousands of years in developing their Vedas, yet they were characterised by an activity in their intellectual enquiries, because the method they followed did not produce any satiety. Max Muller in reference to this trait says :

"In certain chapters of the Brahmanas and in the Upanishads we see a picture of the social and intellectual life of India at that early time, which seems fully to justify the saying that India has always been a nation of philosophers. The picture which these sacred books give us of the seething thoughts of that country may at first

sight seem fanciful and almost incredible; but because the men of ancient India, as they are there represented to us, if by traditions only, are different from Greeks and Romans and from ourselves.........."

What did produce that difference? Undoubtedly it was their conception of life as a whole and their methods of enquiry into it. Their mode of living and their intellectual pursuits were in harmony with each other. There was a frankness in them which was peculiar. They had found out the meaning of this life and adapted their enquiry to it. Their lives were simple but rich. They neglected nothing and valued everything in the perspective of the soul. The troubles of us moderns are that we have forgotten the soul and concentrated all our attention on the body but are not enterprising and active like the Europeans whose body-centric standards of comfort we are imitating. Hence the rivalry, jealousy, enmity, irreverence and other ills that mark us out. The Europeans, being more self-reliant and more sincerely patriotic as well as self-governing, are less selfish than ourselves.

It is not that our ancestors did not know the experimental methods of the moderns and the methods of research, but they did not attach so

much importance to the body. Now who is the gainer, is difficult to say. In the university of Taxila they developed the medical science, but we do not possess any account of their methods of study. Their knowledge of metals and herbs has surprised modern writers. Yet we have to admit that in the realm of the positive sciences there came to be a torpidity after some time. Prof. Keith rightly suggests that the Hindus did not know anything of the historical method, though they had great powers of analysis. His words are :

> A characteristic which in greater or less degree pervades the whole of the scientific literature is the love of subdivision and of inventing distinctions. Everything has to be schematised without regard to the nature of the subject matter. The historical method in fact is normally lacking, yielding to the more attractive habit of analyses of a somewhat superficial character and deduction from bases which have not been sufficiently established."

Thus from the Vedic times onward there has flowed one current of culture gaining in volume and depth and produced the Vedas consisting of the *Samhitas*, *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas*, *Sutras*, and the *Upanishads*, the *Smritis* and the Philosophies, the *Puranas*, the *Tantras*. The

Buddhistic and Jaina systems of culture, with their neglect of rituals and stronger émphasis on ethical pursuits and philanthropy, have later on developed. The *Puranas*, and *Tantras*, as well as the heterodox systems of Buddha and Mahabira contributed to the development of the theory of Incarnation, which was rationally conceived and supported by the Upanishads and the philosophies. The theory of Incarnation has assumed the strongest note in the development of the mediæval cults of Chaitanya and other reformers and the sovereignty of this cult is still in full swing in Hindu thinking. This current is still feeding and nourishing the spiritual life of the Hindus and has, to a certain extent, interfered with the spirit of free enquiry. The Bengal Logicians or Naiyayikas may have assumed an attitude of free enquiry, but they are not quite free from the prevailing beliefs. Rather they employ their ingenuity in support of the incarnation theory and idolatry.

In the *Samhita* portions of the Vedas as well as in the *Brahmanas*, the rituals and ceremonials have been emphasised along with the expressions of gratitude and offerings of thanks to the various deities worshipped at the sacrifices. In the *Sutras* also these sacrifices and the methods of their performance have been put in convenient

mnemonic forms to be memorised and understood clearly.

These duties again, were modernised, so to say, later on, in the *Smritis* or *Dharma Sastras.* Though in the Vedas i. e. in the Samhitas there are philosophical reasonings as to the origin of things and the nature of the gods, and a sort of monotheism attained, yet the most earnest research and enquiry was carried on into the nature of things in the *Upanishads.* Hence the *Upanishads*, at least the principal of them, that are known as the Vedanta, are mainly the treatises in which the nature of the soul of man, its relation with the universe was more fully and frankly discussed. There are some portions, for instance, of the *Chandogya*, in which the rituals also are discussed, but the general character of the *Upanishads* is philosophical. It is these Upanishads that were followed by the development of the philosophies usually called "the Six Orthodox Systems" and the two heterodox systems of Buddha and Mahavira.

Thus we see that the ancient Hindus began with hymns and praises of their gods, but gradually organised various kinds of sacrifices which were all invented according to the requirements of the time. But while pouring libations of *ghee*, they were not idle and mechanical, but

made enquiries into the nature of things around them. These enquiries assumed more systematic forms and were developed into the various systems of philosophies. The orthodox systems remained true in their allegiance to the Vedas, which they came to regard as infallible and authoritative. But the warrior class, it seems, not being in touch with the rituals and the ceremonies like the priests, gradually came to deny their necessity and became more ethical, and theistic.

Really, it seems that the orthodox systems, though they reasoned freely, did not attach so much importance to the individual man. Buddha and Mahavira took their stand on the value of the individual soul, the progress of which, they thought, depended on its own efforts at moral purification and sympathy for others. Thus human love and love for all sentient beings came to be the strong note of these two systems. They also emphasised the need of enlightenment and rejecting rituals pointed out the paths of self-culture. This self-culture was both ethical and intellectual. The desires must be controlled and false notions about the nature of man removed by acquiring true knowledge. Thus the followers of Buddha and Mahavir became great scholars and philosophers studying the nature of man. They by

their analysis pointed out the emptiness of human desires, and to account for the miseries of men relied on the theory of *Karma*. Men suffered because of their previous misdeeds and by subduing desires and following the path of self-control, they might attain Nirvan or perfect purification, so that no future birth would take place. Buddha is represented as exhorting Ananda thus : "Therefore, Ananda, be your own lights ! Be your your own refuge ? Hold steadfastly to the religion as your light, hold steadfastly to the religion as your refuge." Self-reliance is the strongest note in his teaching.

The teachers of the orthodox systems also determined the nature of the soul and pointed out the methods by following which man might overcome all miseries and attain *mukti* or Salvation. Among these six systems, the Vedanta or the Uttarmimansa and the Sankhya system of Kapila are the principal. The one is theistic and the second atheistic. They represent the highest ideal of *Jnan* or knowledge. The Vedanta really is the greatest system which has given rise to various schools of interpreters, of whom Sankaracharya of the 8th century A. D. and Ramanuja of the 12th century are the greatest exponents. According to the former *Brahman* is the only reality and by *Jnana* we see that we

are mere illusions. The universe exists in God and God is the only truth. Even the individual soul is an illusion.

Ramanuja, who is as great as Sankara, does not deny the reality of the individual soul, but establishes the reality and oneness of the human soul with God. These truths are not new. They were taught by the Rishis of the Upanishads, among whom there were two schools of thinkers, one school headed by Yajnavalkya denied the reality of the individual soul and the other school headed by Chitra and other Rishis accepted the reality of the world and of the soul of man and proved their existence in God. It is really this school as represented by Ramanuja which has been more popular. All the teachers of the *Bhakti* cults of mediæval India have followed Ramanuja rather than Sankara. It seems, after all, to be a matter of temperament and culture. Some people with a rationalistic turn and hard-headness prefer the cold system of Sankara. But those who are of a loving, warm nature, prefer the interpretation of Ramanuja, according to whose teaching God is a loving personality. All the vast systems of *Bhakti* literature, the Puranas, the Tantras, the Vaisnava literature, the Grantha Saheb of the Sikh Gurus and other saints of mediæval India follow this

dualistic philosophy the kernel of which is "we live in God in a permanent relation."

The author of the Gita, however, who believes, like the authors of the Purans, in the theory of incarnation and who was influenced by the ethical teachings of the Buddhistic system, brings about a beautiful synthesis among all the Sadhan Margas, viz., *Jnan*, *Bhakti* and *Karma*, Knowledge, Devotion and Work, and clearly analyses them so as to bring out the inter-relation among all the systems, viz., the Vedic-rituals, Upanishadik *Jnan*, Puranic *Bhakti* and Buddhistic theory of *Karma*, and love of man. The Hindu theory of incarnation has a peculiarity of its own and seems to be more reasonable than the doctrine of Trinity.

One thing should be noted that in India more than in any other land since the most ancient times till the establishment of the British supremacy in the 18th century, there was a seething intellectual activity in connection with religion. In other countries dogmas have paralysed intellectual life, but in India, since the days of the Vedas, vigorous enquiries were carried on by devotees into the nature of the soul and its relation with the universe. Where else are there such vast literatures, as the Vedas, Smritis, Purans, Tantras, the Buddhistic books, the Jaina

books, the modern Smritis, *Navya Nyaya* of Bengal, the vast Vaisnava literature of Bengal, the Tamil and Telugu literature, the Sikh literature, etc.? The whole European literature till the 18th century will be found to be poor and shallow, both as regards quantity and quality, when compared with the literatures of India.*
European critics give the palm to the Greek literature for its artistic excellence, and we need not dispute this point, though it is not an unbiassed opinion, yet as regards religious fervour and variety of feelings, Indian literature will be found to be far richer. Since the 19th century, however, we are nowhere. Our education has been taken up by foreigners into their hands and though we pretend much, really we are far behind all other countries, as our system of education is an exotic, not harmonised with our deeper spiritual and ethical life. We are not nourished on the system of thought of our ancestors and are forced into an alien system.

* European literature till the 18th century lacked the modern *Brahmabad* of Hegel and its ethics also was merely an exposition of Mosaic decalogue. India had attained a development in the pre-Buddhistic era which flowered more fully in the Buddhist and Jaina ethics. The Greeks had a beautiful literature, but they were not so deep in their spiritual musings, and Plato's philosophy did not influence Greek life.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PURSUIT OF *BHAKTI* AS A METHOD OF CULTURE

Though in the organisation of the modern educational systems in the various countries of the world, *Bhakti* or love of God seems to have been eliminated almost entirely, yet it occupied a very important place in the old system of India, when whatever the student learned had to be acquired from the words of the teacher, who, therefore, had to be served and pleased and who also by his love and care for the children deserved the homage of the pupils entrusted to him, because he was, above all, a godly man, and pursued knowledge as a means of attaining *mukti*. Rishi Sandilya defines *Bhakti* as "सा परानुरक्तिरीश्वरे". *Bhakti* means a great love for and devotion to God and this devotion is possible only when God is realised as a personality. Fortunately the Rishis who worshipped various gods under diverse names, came to realise him as one person, so they called him Father "पितानोऽसि" (thou art our father). They exhorted their pupils to know God as a person. तं वेद्यं "पुरुषं वेद यथा मा वो मृत्युः परिव्यथाः"। Upanishad.

[Know him as a person and then death will give you no pain.]

They gradually came to realise him as the nearest and dearest personality. "अन्तरतर अन्तरतम: यदय आत्मा" Upanishad. He is the most intimate friend, whose care is ever active on our behalf. Yet it may be admitted that during the vedic era, though they felt his presence everywhere, yet they realised more his power and providence than his loving care for each individual. The Jewish people, though not so liberal in their outlook as the Hindus, had a consciousness of the loving mercy of Jehovah, whose direct intervention, in their national history, made them so enthusiastic in their faith. The authors of the Vedas had no such traditions like those of the Jews and hence their realisation was more direct. They had not to remind themselves of the past history, so much, and so repeatedly, because every sunrise was to them a revelation. The people of India have realised the immanence of God much more fully than other races and hence European observers carelessly label us as pantheists, because they, trained as they are in the Jewish tradition and the transcendence of God, cannot harmonise this pantheistic attitude with a strong theistic life. One who sees the personality of God in every phenomenon of nature

and bows down to him can hardly be appreciated by those who believe that God reveals himself to particular persons at certain particular places.

As thought advanced with experience of the facts of life, in the Upanishadik period, the personality of God came to be more vividly realised. They knew him as ('पुरुष' महान्त' आदित्यवर्णं' तमस: परस्तात्') the great personality, resplendent as the sun and beyond the region of darkness. *Svetasvatara.* Janak, Yajnavalkya and others of earnest nature felt his presence in their souls and saw that he was 'श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्र' चक्षुषश्चक्षु: मनसोमन:' (Ear of the ear, eye of the eye, mind of the mind. *Kena*) ; and their own personality as a mere shadow of the personality of the great *Brahman,* who pervades the universe. They realised him as the soul, of their souls, as the thread connecting and linking the universe. Few other people whether among the ancients or the moderns were so obsessed by God. They were God-intoxicated men, possessed by God, and hence they could not but make him the sole object of pursuit in life. This God-consciousness became deeper and more pervasive, and this belief developed their intellectual and moral powers. It was God who inspired their highest poetry. Whether they wrote poetry or philosophy or science, in every pursuit religion was the motive.

When subsequent to the vedic age, the Purans, the Epics, etc. began to be compiled, this personality of God became more developed. The belief in the incarnation had its roots in the Vedas, because in the Rig Veda itself the idea of the unity of Godhead had developed, though different names might be used. For instance, in this hymn, appears.

इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहु
रथो दिव्यः स सुपर्णो गरुत्मान्
एकं सद्विप्राः बहुधा वदन्त्य
ग्निं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः Rig. 1.22.164.46.

[They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna and Agni ; he is the heavenly bird Garutmat ;

To what is one the poets give many names ;
They call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvan].

When once the idea was realised, it spread in the whole community. This tendency of raising one God to the dignity of the supreme God by his worshippers prevails even to-day. The worshippers of Siva call him the only God, This Max Muller characterises as Henotheism. The next step was realising this god as the soul of our souls and this many Rishis did, so that Yajnavalkya might exclaim, "Aham Brahmasmi". Sevataketu's father says : "Thou art that "(तत्त्वमसि

श्वेतकेतो) These ideas were variously developed and so those who were godlike men for their wisdom and power might easily be poetised as gods or incarnations. The author of the Gita, who has a Puranic cast of mind, and was a *vakta* (devotee), at the same time, has made Krishna an incarnation of God. Hopkin's theory is that the Gita, which was more Vedantic at first and thus based on the view of an impersonal God was, later on, re-handled, during the final formation of the Mahabharata, by another, who was a follower of the Krishna cult and was given the present form in which Krishna is the incarnation of the *Brahman*. This theory of the incarnation, which is really a vedantic view, has been the most widely held belief in India and the Purans have popularised it. The Hindus have been the most devout people and it is this theory that has made them the greatest *vaktas*. Europe got this idea of God's incarnation through Christianity and whatever religion she has got, since the time of St. Paul, is due to the influence of this theory. The Greeks and the Romans had no clear grasp of this idea that God is immanent in every human soul, so their gods were external deities living in the sky or on Olympus. The theism ot the Hindus is a unique thing. Most probably the theory of the Incarnation

of Jesus was of Indian origin through Persia, because it was the the three Magi, led by a star from Chaldea to the manger where the infant was born, who offered their worship there and recognised him as a god. So the recognition of the incarnate God came from the east. *Vakti* or love of God has been most fully developed in India, where people have conceived him as father, mother, as the beloved, as friend, as son, etc. The Jews conceived of him as Lord and master, king or sovereign. But here he was प्राणस्यप्राण (life of life) with the Rishis, and beloved and darling with Gaurango. God as a lover is an erotic cult and it has been developed nowhere else as by the Vaisnavas of Bengal and Guzerat. It may have led to corruptions, but no mystic has been able to conceive a more appealing and a higher ideal. The *Vakta* is Radha, longing and yearning for her lover, and whenever she hears the music of the flute of the Beloved, she does not care for any wordly considerations.

This is the highest ideal of the love of God. Vaisnavas say that the pursuit of knowledge or the performance of *karma* are rather hindrances than help in the way of such self-surrender. They are followers of what is called the longing love of God (एकान्ति भक्ति:). Just as the river proceeds

seaward without knowing why, so should the human soul yearn after God. India's greatness was attained not only in her philosophy, but in her cultivation of *Bhakti* also. The epics of Homer and Virgil or of Milton may have grandeur as poems, depicting as they do noble characters. Neither the Ramayan nor the Mahabharat is an epic of that category. They were compiled for religious ministration, and not necessarily to sing merely of heroic deeds. Heroism was appreciated and cultivated in India as elsewhere, as life required it. They had to preserve themselves against their enemies, yet the Hindu epics were rather Puranas, creating noble characters for spiritual ministration of the Indian masses. Even now they are read, recited and expounded to admiring crowds, who shed tears at the suffering of the righteous and are spiritually and morally edified. The actual story of the Mahabharat does not occupy more than a third of the book, but there are so many Upakhyanas or stories that they make up the major part of the book and on their account the book is so greatly appreciated. The Purans often repeat each other, yet each has something new to teach, some new story to impress the *lila* of the gods on their worshippers. They are not to be valued as histories, though some of

them do contain some historical accounts. Their main purpose was to minister into the religious needs of the common people to whom the Vedas were not only prohibited but unintelligible too. The Mahabharat has been popularly called the Panchama Veda (the fifth veda) as it teaches the same lessons as the Vedas contain. Really, though the vedas have become unintelligible and unavailable, too, yet people of India are not left helpless. People there are who regret that there is not one book for the Hindus but so many and hence they are bewildered, lacking as they do a book like the Koran or the Bible. But this regret is not very sensible. India is so rich in her literary treasures that religious literature of the whole human race outside India cannot cope with hers. Is it not a folly to regret that we are not poor like others, because we do not know how to use our riches? Religion has been the greatest incentive to culture. Among the Vaisnavas female education prevailed long before it was introduced under the inspiration of the new educational ideals of the British rulers.

This culture of *Bhakti* has undoubtedly been widely spread and deepened by the theory of incarnation and by the writing of the Purans, though errors and superstitions have been added

to thereby and the greatness of the human soul forgotten, to a certain extent. Behind it is the vedantic metaphysics and so no rationalisation can injure it. It is holding its ground and though we may regret its excesses, yet it must be admitted that for the masses it is the religion. The caste system made the Brahmins objects of reverence to the lower castes and this also has fostered the tendency of *Bhakti* among the common people, having led at the same time, to the degradation and lowering of man as man. Untouchability is an effect of caste. The theory of equality as preached by the democratic philosophers may be politically useful and beneficial, but there is no doubt that it injures the feeling of reverence. If we deduct the literature that has been produced in India since the age of the Purans for the purpose of teaching the people to love God as incarnated, the culture of the masses will suffer greatly. Most of our people may be illiterate, yet by hearing *Kathaks*, *Pathaks*, *Paribrajaks* and other such instructors narrate the stories of the Purans, they get a culture which will very favourably compare with the culture of the masses of other lands. We should try to teach the teachers of the masses, if we want to improve them. Hence education should be moulded according to people's religious ideals.

otherwise mere literary education will not be very fruitful. We must give up the shibboleths of missionaries and try to understand the peculiarity that we have inherited. Inspite of the veneer of the modern education, our souls are still intact. We should wake up and organise our education in the ancestral moulds that have come down to us from the days of the Rig Veda, and make the soul the centre of our activities.

We should dismiss from our mind the cult that education means simply intellectual culture. Education of the right sort will require the development of the whole man and so the cultivation of the love of God is necessary for the intellect also. How to cultivate *Bhakti* under the altered condition is a great question for which an offhand solution cannot be proposed. Yet a study of the culture history of India leaves no doubt in our mind, that without the cultivation of *Bhakti*, the culture of the people of India will remain incomplete and as such often more injurious than no culture. The godlessness that is growing more and more troublesome among the young generations will prove ruinous, unless checked betimes by giving a new orientation to the lines of culture already established. All other religions may become unbelievable and be rejected in the future, but

India need not be afraid of any such catastrophe, if her leaders wake up to their old ideals and their heritage and change their cultural outlook in the light of the old ideals which are *Sanatan* and unchangeable.

CHAPTER IX

PERFORMANCE OF *KARMA*.

First of all let us see what the Rishis believed to be the origin of *Karma*. They somehow, in the earliest stage of their social life, came to divide themselves into four classes or castes. as we see in the tenth *mandal* of the Rig Veda, where the image occurs that the Brahmin was his mouth, his hands the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas his thighs and the Sudra his feet.

ब्राह्मणोस्य मुखमासीत् बाहू राजन्य कृता ।
ऊरू तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥ Rig. Veda 10 7.90.

They thus ascribed the origin of all men to the same source and in their conception the organic nature of the relation among the various castes was an evident truth. All men, whether high or low, made up the body of the *purusha*, who gave form to himself in the universe. Is there any such sublime image in the world's literature to be compared with that given in the eleventh chapter of the Gita, in which the universe is considered as the body of God? The conception of the Gita evidently comes from the Vedas that

the whole human society makes up the body of God. The Gita, following the Rig Veda, says that castes were created by God.

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मयासृष्टं गुणकर्म्मविभागशः । Gita IV. 13

[I created the four castes, giving them different functions and different attributes].

Thus are the different castes, with their functions, fully stated in the Vedas. The Gita says :

"कर्म्मं ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि" Gita III. 15.

etc, i. e. the duties are defined by the Vedas. They include both the rituals and the occupations by which people were to live.

In the *Grihya Sutras*, and the *Sankhyayana Grihya Sutras*, we find the rites and sacraments to be performed by the different castes described in details. A Brahmin boy, for instance, should be initiated in his eighth year, a Kshatriya in the eleventh year; the Brahmin is to wear an antelope skin, whereas the Kshatriya the skin of a spotted deer; a Vaisya in the twelfth year and is to wear a cow-hide, etc. The Smritis, such as, Manu and others that were compiled afterwards derived their materials from the *Vaidic* Brahmanas and *Sutras*. There *Karmas* were defined, and enjoined. We have similar details in the Mosaic laws as given in the *Book of*

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Numbers, Exodus, etc. The *Vaidic* sacrifices, however, and the rites grew complex and were multiplied by the different schools of Brahmins and the compilations and systematisations that we meet with as division of the Vedas into four, and the Vedangas etc. took place afterwards. There seems to have been perfect freedom of invention at first. They composed the hymns in their own way and borrowed good things from each other. In ancient India there was no codification and binding and fettering the individual. The rules and regulations that may be irksome to us to-day or were so to their successors after thousands of years, must not have been so to their originators. The kings, moreover, among the Hindus were not the fountains of laws. They were mere executive officers to carry out the injunctions of the Sastras and of the Rishis. The Rishis also considered themselves as guided by the Vedas that were revealed to them.

With no other race *karma* of which the *Yajnas* were the symbols was considered so seriously. We find in the third chapter of the Gita lessons on *karma*, which we cannot find in any other literature. In the time of the Gita, however, there had been an advance in the conception of *karma*. When Arjun refuses to fight in accordance with the Sastric injunctions, which

he considers as narrow as compared with the sentiment of pity, love and reverence for superiors, he has, evidently, developed an ethical view not found in the Sastras. At this time, moreover, there were others who condemned *karma* or rituals and sacrifices. Thus there was a great difficulty in deciding which way to go. This difficulty is indicated by the author in the Gita IV. 16. किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः (what is duty and what is not duty, is a difficult problem even for the wise) and therefore Srikrishna insists that instead of feeling puzzled by diffierent theories, 'Do the nearest duty by giving up all desires and realising, through *Jnana* (IV. 19), that you are not the doer' (IV. 18). The author of the Gita finds the universe as doing *karma* (III. 15—I6) just as Wordsworth in his 'Ode on Duty' says :

"Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong
And the most ancient heavens,
through thee are fresh and strong."

Arjun doubted the validity of the caste duties, but Krishna insists on their performance, and rightly does it, because in India even to-day civilisation is being maintained, to some extent, by the different castes doing their duties.

The author of the Gita, however, does not insist on the performance of *Karma* or *Yajna*

for attaining heaven or any other result, taught in the Vedas. He holds out the highest ideal of "निष्काम कर्म्म" which, he believes, will lead to the purification of the heart, and says that by doing *karma* one will attain *naiskarma* and even *Siddhi* (III. 20). The third chapter of the Gita clearly indicates the highest stage of ethical *karma* and this must have been the combined effect of orthodox teaching and orthodox performance of duties, of the influence of the heterodox teachers, both Buddhists and Jainas, because these heterodox teachers also attached importance to action and helped others in all possible ways. They had pity for all sufferers and they worked, without caring for the Vedic injunctions, for the alleviation of human sufferings. They also attained purity without doing *Vaidik karma*, but the majority of people were still doing *Vaidik karma* and preserving society and morals.

We admit that in the early Vedic writings of the Hindus, there were no scientific treatises dealing with the problems of ethics, yet there is no doubt that people in the remote past were quite clearly conscious of moral ideals in their transactions with each other. Neither were they an unpractical race of religious dreamers. But they devoted their attention to all possible subjects,

scientific or other. As the early Vedic writers had no revelations to go by, they in their religious and other activities were guided by the instinctive moral ideals which find expressions now and then. The peculiar point to be noted in this connection is that the Hindus were more than other races guided in their religious and legal activities by the ideals of ethical right and wrong and for this reason, there is a universal outlook both in their religion and laws which cannot be met with anywhere else. The Jewish or Mosaic ethical rules are narrow and parochial as compared with the broad outlook of the Hindu lawgivers. These our teachers laid down truths, for the whole humanity, whereas the Jewish prophets are always inspired with hatred against the Gentiles and are anxious about their own existence and triumph, as the chosen race of men. The moral outlook was wide as humanity in China and India. Even now there is a catholicity in the Hindu mind which is difficult to be imitated by others. Was not the Hindu's treatment of slaves much better than that of all other races of antiquity? The laws of war and treatment of the antagonist will compare very favourably with other systems.

The dualistic, metaphysics of the Jewish, Christian and other such religions has influenced

the modern ethical thinkers and writers whose ethical systems are coloured by this philosophy of life. The want and disregard of political freedom in India and the crushing effect of the subordination of the people to kings and priests cramped the development of the full ethical manhood of the people here according to our modern conception of it. Otherwise the philosophical basis on which the morality of the Rishis of the era of the Upanishad stood would have led to a far greater development in India than the world has seen. In support of our statement we just refer to the Buddhist morality which attained a perfection undreamt of by any other race of antiquity. Inspite of all these hindrances of caste and political subjection to kings there was a progress in ethical ideals from the remotest past till the 7th century A.D. i.e. the age of classical writers of Sanskrit. It should be noted, however, that Hindu Ethics is not based on the indiividuality of each man and woman, but on the ideal of attaining certain truths in life.

In the Gita we find the theory of Duty fully developed and the Gita teachings on *karma* are more comprehensive than the teachings of Kant and other ethical writers of modern time. There is a clear indication in it of pure ethics in the Hindu mind since the time of the Upanishad.

In the *Brihadaranyak* Yajnavalkya lays down the most strtling theory of universal love in comparison with which the Gospel lesson, "Do unto others as you wish to be done by" appears merely a surface truth. In instructing his wife Maitreyi, the Rishi says : "Verily, the husband is not dear, that you may love the husband, but that you may love the self, therefore a husband is dear." etc. If one takes his stand on this basic truth, that there is the same self in all, will not his dealings with the world be far more ethical than those of others, who do not understand this essential truth, but have developed an idea of equality and fairness simply from the idea of brotherhood of men ? Hindu morality as compared with that of the great stoics, such as, Seneca, Epictatus, or Marcus Aurelius will be found to be far better grounded. If one compares the ideas given in the Gita about *karma* with the lessons taught by "the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius," we hope he will agree with us. The ethics of the west is based on a dualistic metaphysics ; whereas the Hindu morality is based on a monistic metaphysics and monistic attitude of mind.

We do not believe that the ethics of an atheist or agnostic, however lofty, can compare with that of one who believes in the Supreme Soul

and discovers its relation with himself as well as others. The Hindu has, inspite of his caste system and other prejudices, been more liberal in his dealings with the brother man and has been more solicitous to preserve others' lives than all other races. In our Bengali we have a saying that it is dangerous to deal with poeple without faith in a future life. Is not the hypocrisy and the false profession of the modern enlightened people throughout the world a corroboration of this maxim ? Contracts have lost their sanctity, pledges are being given and violated. Is not the moral chaos that we are passing through at present due to the loss of faith in a good and just God, who has established a moral order under which we are to live and on which we all depend ? The happy state that Meghasthenes saw in India at the end of the 4th century B. C. was the result of people's ethical development, so that they trusted in each other and no legal documents were necessary for making the contracts binding. There was no decline in Indian life and manners till the time of Harshavaradhan in the 7th century A. D., but when Yuan Chuang came he noticed a demoralisation among the Buddhist monks, since which time we are deteriorating inspite of all our efforts at culture and progress.

The cultural value of *karma* is ethical development and this was attained fully. People are working as they formerly did, as "शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः" (Even your body cannot be maintained unless you work—Gita III.6.), yet how great is the difference between the spirit and ideal of modern people as compared with those of the ancients. They also were selfish, no doubt, and had to maintain their lives, but they were not made so cruel and ruthless by their self-seeking. With them *karma* also was a means of salvation and therefore the smallest duty had to be performed according to certain regulations. It is only in Christian convents and monasteries where people lead serious lives, that they follow rules even as regards small duties and consequently they also consider work as worship. "*Laborare est orare*" is the motto of their lives, just as the Gita teaches स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः (Man attains salvation by worshipping God by his work—XVIII. 46.). When a man does his works for pleasing God and as His servant, the work done will purify his heart and make him a true lover of God. In the Hindu conception, work is necessary for *Jnan* as well as love of God. All the three disciplines are organically connected and are mutually helpful, though in the days of the Purans and the mediæval period

some people might belittle the importance of *Karma* and *Jnan*.

We thus see that the ideal of *karma* of the ancients was as seriously developed as their moral and religious beliefs enabled them to do. Our fathers performed their duties as enjoined in the Vedas and Smritis, including the sacraments and other rites. The circumstances under which they lived enabled them to multiply these rites and priesthood encouraged them. A time however, came, when the sacrifices involving the slaughter of animals came to be looked down upon and questioned. The deep enquiries of kings like Janaka or Ajatasatru of Benares into the nature of the soul led them to doubt the efficacy of sacrifices. Nay, they began to hold that *karma* or work might be done in a spirit that produced a conceit and egoism. Whenever some *karma* is done, some sort of egoism is unavoidable as its consequence. The teachings of the author of the Gita are directed mainly to the solution of this problem, viz, elimination of the ego from *karma*. The Acharyya emphasises, that, this effect of *karma* has to be avoided. The results of the work we do are unavoidable. Some of these results are external and materialistic ; others are moral and spiritualistic. *Karma* is a bond. As soon as a work is

done, results accrue and they continue, not only within the limits of this life, but may extend beyond the dissolution of this body. The Hindu theory of *karma* and its effects, therefore, is very fine and subtle. Christianity teaches, in a rough and ready manner, that sins will be punished in the Purgatory or Inferno and virtues rewarded in Heaven; the old Jewish system, without clear faith in a future state of existence, insisted on virtue and the avoidance of sin and believed that they were rewarded and punished in this life, if not in their doers, then in their children's children. The Hindu thinkers traced the effects of *karma*, both good and bad, to future births and states of existence. Birth, a bondage according to them, is the result of *karma*. Hence they found out that to liberate oneself from this bond of birth, one has to do his *karma* by ascribing their results to God;

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥ Gita V. 10.

[One who does his works, ascribing them to God, is not touched by any sin, effects of *karma*, just as the lotus leaf is not touched by water].

Thus, all works are hindrances, though works are necessary for all. The secret method for doing our *karma* without being involved in their

effects is to attain *naiskarma* and that is possible by believing in God's agency for every work.

It is *karma* that leads to birth and salvation means avoidance of birth in the flesh. Buddhist and Jaina teachers also believed in this rebirth and their method was not to ascribe the effects to God, but to work without desires. Their theory practically teaches us, like "Kantian Categorical Imperative", to work like machines and they, thus advocating desirelessness, have taught the necessity of giving up *karma* altogether. Sankaracharya who pleads for *Jnan* (knowledge) and emphasises giving up *karma* as a method for for attaining *naiskarma*, has not very unjustly been called a "Prachhanna Bauddha" (a hidden Buddhist). No doubt the conclusion of the Buddhists that we are to give up desires is agreeable to the teaching of the Gita Theists, however, say that to give up desire and to convert oneself into a machine is not possible, believing in the personality of God, who creates the *karmapravaha* (the currents of the work in the universe) as the Gita teaches in the Chapter XI. European theories of *karma* as duty similarly teach us to work like machines, however practical and clever they be.

The Vedas and Smritis that encourage people to perform sacrifices as means of attaining heaven

and happiness in the next life, came to be disregarded and hence the "पुष्पिता वाचः" or tempting teachings of the Vedas the Gita condemns. But as even the desires of rewards are needful for some people, the Gita has to contradict this lofty teaching and say "यज्ञदान तपकर्म पावनानि मनीषिणाम" (sacrifices, charity and penances purify the thoughtful—XVIII. 6.) and they must not be given up. The central teaching of the Gita is quite unobjectionable. He knows the nature of the soul and cares little for materialistic heaven of any geographical nature. Hence even good works for the satisfaction of desires he considers as bonds. Hindu *bhuktas* or devotees characterise good works as chains of gold and bad works as chains of iron. The true aim should be the attainment of God and the means therefore is the love of God. Work they considered as a dangerous thing and so very deep thinking was necessary for eliminating egoism. How to conquer the ego created by the desire of *karma* has been carefully considered by the Hindu teachers of old. Europe has not dived so deep into the effects of *karma*. In that case, they would not be so proud and anxious to conquer and rob others, neither so eager to save others or to enlighten them. Some philanthropic work should not be thrust upon others.

Now we hope the reader will be convinced that the view of *karma* of our teachers was harmonised with the highest spiritual truths discovered by them. They also knew how necessary it was to be engaged in doing good to others (सर्व्व भूतहिते रताः Gita) and how to perform लोकश्रेय: (good to others) yet they knew that these lofty principles might lead to egoism and spiritual loss. They knew how desires could beget desires and thus endless desires would be troublesome. Therefore they inferred that one should give up all desires and work for the love of God. Hence the Gita lays down :

मदर्थमपि कर्म्माणि कुर्व्वन् सिद्धिं अवाप्स्यसि । XI. 10.

[One who works to please God, and works as his instrument, will not be bound by *karma*.]

This is the peculiarity of the Hindu view of *karma* that it is a bond and leads to rebirth. You are to do your *karma* in such a spirit that it may keep you free from egoism and conceit and thus free you from the bonds of rebirth.

CHAPTER X

FEMALE EDUCATION

In order to understand the nature and character of the culture of the females in ancient India, it will be necessary to look at the position that the woman has held in the Hindu family since the days of the Rig Veda. I do not, however, consider that position was all that might be desirable, though when one compares the family life of the ancient Indian people with that of other races, the position of the Indian woman will be found to be a unique one. A volume may be written on the various points that may be raised in connection with the woman problem of the day. But we are concerned here to point out what the ideal of life and culture for the woman was.

The foundation of the society was the family in the days of the Rig Veda, at the head of which stood the father as the lord of the house-hold. But the mother was the *sahadharmini*. "The Vedic singers knew no more tender relation than that between the husband and his 'willing loving wife,' who is praised as his "*grihini*" (the keeper of the house.")

> "The high position of the wife above all is shown by the fact that she participates in the sacrifices with her husband. With harmonious mind at the early dawn, both in fitting words, send up their prayers to the eternals. These relations are comprehensible only if monogamy was the rule. Though there are instances of polygamy among kings and nobles, yet the ordinary condition was a united pair, with one heart, one mind, free from discord".

Marriage was looked upon as an arrangement founded by the gods, the aim of which was the mutual support of man and wife, and the propagation of the race,

In the *Griha Sutras*, the greatest importance has been attached to the marriage ceremony and even particulars of the girl to be chosen indicated. She is asked to be the queen with her father-in-law. The husband says, "I seize thy hand for the sake of happiness." That they were made one was expressed by such Mantras : "This am I that art thou, that art thou this am I" ; "the heaven I, the earth thou." They took seven steps together in order to become friends. The account that we read proves it to have been a solemn sacrament, an instrument of purification. From the account again, it seems that the girl was a grown up one capable of understanding

the functions through which she went and so conjugal intercourse for the first three nights was forbidden.

There was no doubt that in all ancient communities a preference was given to the male child.

If we compare this solemn marriage sacrament with the marriage rites of other races, we shall have no doubt that our ancestors attached a far greater importance to the woman, the mother of the family. The wife is called *Jaya* i. e. in whom the husband is born as the son. Hence Manu unhesitatingly wrote : "यत्र नार्य्यस्तु पुज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्रदेवताः '। (where the women are honoured, the gods are pleased). How indispensable was the wife is proved by the fact that Ramachandra had to make a golden image of Sita, when he performed the *Aswamedha* sacrifice, during the the absence of Sita, whom he had banished to gratify his subjects. Has anywhere else the woman been made a spiritual partner thus? Though the Vedas were not so systematically taught to the girls, yet there is no doubt that many women were learned enough to compose hymns and in the Upanishadik period we come across the names of *Brahmavadini* (versed in the philosophy of the Absolute) ladies. There is no doubt that while the Rishis, taught their sons and pupils, the daughters also heard the recita-

tions and as there was no segregation of women, girls had ample opportunity and freedom to pick up knowledge. There are several names of eminent ladies that we find mentioned in the Vedic and subsequent periods.

The Greeks and the Romans held women in very low esteem, and though there also the mother was the matron of the family, yet in their rough military communities, they being all soldiers and heroes, the woman was an object of luxury and a chattel. The women were dragged into slavery, when their men folk were conquered and even princesses were made slaves. In Homer's Iliad as well as in the dramas of Aeschylus, of Sophocles and of Euripides, we read of queens and princesses being reduced to slavery. The women were among them absolutely without education. The Spartan girls were made into romps by physical exercise, but Lycurgus provided no other education for them. Because of the want of education and culture of the woman, neither among the Romans nor among the Greeks true love or erotic poetry could develop. Greek eroticism is conceived of between two men and homosexual relations are idolised in poetry. We read in Greek antiquities only of Sapho, a poetess and of Aspasia, a courtesan, mistress of Pericles, as enlightened

women among the Greeks. Hence poetic love did not develop between men and women much among the Greeks, neither did it develop among the Romans till the more recent times, when the Romans came in contact with the orient. The Teutonic or the Germanic woman might be free and had to be courted, but as the Teutons themselves were not a cultured race, very little culture could be expected among their females. Neither among the Jews did the woman have any culture worth the name. In the world-famous psalms of David, we do not read of any psalm being composed by a woman. Only the queen of Sheba might be a woman of some culture.

Whereas among the Aryans we come across several names since the Vedik days of female composers of Hymns : The following instances of ladies who were seers (मन्त्रद्रष्ट्र्यः ब्रह्मवादिन्यः) and erudite scholars of the Vedik age may be cited : Viswavará of the family of Atri (Rig Veda V. 28. 0 III 4. 3) Apálá daughter of sage Atri (Rig VIII 91. 1-7) Sasvatí daughter of sage Angirasa (Rig. VIII 91. 1-7) : Lopámudra wife of sage Agastya (Rig. X. 125 (1-8) ; Savitri (Rig X. 85) ; Atreyi (V. 28). Of Maítreyi and Kátyáyani, the wives of sage Yajnavalkya, Maitreyi was well-known as a *Brahmavadini* : Gargi, a virgin lady, was learned enough to

enter into a dispute with Yajnavalkya himself; Devahuti, the daughter of Swayambhubamanu and wife of Rishi Kardam and mother of Anusuya and Arundhuti, both famous and erudite ladies, and also of the great philosopher Kapila, the founder of the Sankhya System of philosophy. As there was no hide-bound dogma in those days against the woman's education, all opportunities were utilised for culture. Just as now-a-days the duties of the house-hold interfere with the ladies' pursuit of knowledge and they can do little for enlightenment, similarly the house-hold duties stood in their ways in those early days, and the women could not so largely attain intellectual culture.

There were or were not prohibitions in later times against women's learning the Vedas, yet they were not indifferent to the opportunities for culture. In the Epics and Puranas also we come across names of educated ladies. Kunti, in the Mahabharata, asks Srikrishna to tell her sons of the story of a well-known lady named Bidulá, who was famous for her oratory etc., and who exhorted her son for recovering his father's kingdom. Sulabha, another learned lady, is named in the Mahabharata Santi Prava. Savari is mentioned in the Ramayana. In more recent times Ubhaya Bhárati, the wife of

Mandan Misra, is known to have been a great philosopher. No doubt there might have been some Rishis, just as there are now misogynists or woman-haters, who do not like women to be educated and to be equal to men. It was such people who might have written against the Vedas being taught to women. But from the names that we come across in every period of our history, we may safely conclude the healthy state of mind of parents and husbands who utilised the opportunities for the education of their daughters or wives.

Much has been said in favour of the chivalry of the European nations in modern times and their respectful treatment of the woman. This woman-worship, though not a spiritual thing of which they may be rightly proud, is of eastern origin, though Hallam, in this "Literature of the middle Age," controverts this theory and wants to trace it to Teutonic origin. The Arab conquerors or the children of the sun introduced it into southern Europe and it was a fleshly love they taught. It was no doubt sublimated by Petrarch and his predecessors, the Troubadours of southern France. Christianity purified the woman-worship of the Troubadours and in Spenser and in Tennyson we see the purified form of love. Yet this woman-worship of the knight errants and the cult of mother-

worship which has come down to us from time beyond memory are quite different things. The cult of mother-worship prevailed even during the days of Mohenjodaro civilisation, i. e. about 5000, B. C. The reverence that a Hindu pays to the mother, whom he identifies with the mother of the universe, is something alien to the spirit of chivalry. It is this realisation of motherhood in the woman that teaches us to look upon another's wife as mother ("मातृवत् परदारेषु"). This lofty attitude made it possible for our women to attain a position of respect and responsibility and attain religious culture. The woman being the centre of the domestic circle, the moral atmosphere of the family depended on her. Her literacy might be neglected, but her real culture of the soul was attended to. Now the times are altered and altered ideals hold the ground. But in ancient time the woman being an inseparable part of the man, she did not think of marraige on the death of her husband. Fidelity to one man and one woman is still the highest ideal everywhere in poetry and what was the highest in imagination was reduced here to practice, as philosophy or wisdom was not divorced from life.* The "custom of *suttee*," when voluntary,

* The Hindu wife had not a separate individuality

is a unique ideal of love and union between the husband and the wife. Here the woman was the better half, not figuratively, but literally. Her culture was spiritual and not intellectual, though intellectual culture was not a taboo for the woman, that many wrongly suppose to have been the case. The extra-ordinary developement of erotic poetry and eroticism in our literature proves the culture of females, without which love poetry does not flourish so much. We have already seen that the great Buddha by establishing the custom of monasticism for the woman greatly advanced the cause of female enlightenment and many Buddhist ladies such as Supriya, Sujata, Mahaprajapati, Josodhara, Sanghamitra, Bishakha, Satisamvala, Siddha Sadhika are mentioned as worthy enlightened ladies. Our old ideals require a little reinterpretation in the light of modern requirements and nothing more.

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and hence when she became a widow, her religious exercises benefited her husband. The theory of individuality that Europe has taught us and practised since the days of Socrates has developed us in politics and self-reliance, no doubt, but it has narrowed our spiritual outlook. The members of a family were sharers in the same spiritual life and so it was the duty of a son to pay the debts of the father. If a son deposed falsely before the court, the fathers in heaven were injured. Where this individualism of European ethics will lead us, is difficult to foresee.

CHAPTER XI

DEFECTS THAT HAVE CREPT INTO HINDU IDEALS

(CONCLUSION)

In conclusion I wish to point out that the ancient system of culture, though so beautiful and perfect, has led to a decline since the mediæval period. It is not so simple a problem to point out the causes that have made us what we are to-day, and there can be no unanimity, either. According to the people of old type, poor Kali era is responsible for our iniquity and weakness, and this fatalism is the philosophy of ninety-nine persons out of each hundred. According to others, we represent the old age of humanity and Europe youth, and so we need not grudge them their power and supremacy. This is also a sort of fatalistic attitude. According to others, geography is responsible for our present lot. There have been many eminent thinkers in the last century, Buckles and others, who ascribed the greatest influence on man to the enviroments amidst which he lived and among these the geography of a country was considered as the greatest factor. In studying anthropology, however, we cannot treat man like other animals, because man does not depend

simply on his sense perceptions for his guidance, but having a soul, he relies more on the unseen or transcendent realities, as Max Muller has said.

There are very many other physical and historical causes besides the few indicated above that will account for our downfall. In my humble opinion what made us great once has made us small by being led into excesses, sometimes, by being misunderstood at other times, and by being misapplied in disregard of the changed enviroment. Evils of all sorts have eluded analysis and can hardly be accounted for and this evil of our decline also, in the same way, refuses to be diagnosed.

Yet I am of opinion that the caste system which assigned the duty of fighting to a section of the people and made others peaceful and weak and idle spectators, when the Rajas were fighting with the Islamic invaders, is the greatest cause of our political serfdom. Caste system was a boon for spiritual and intellectual growth up to a certain stage and may have been even now a means of preservation of the Hindu community, but undoubtedly it has made consolidation of the Hindus and Hindu community impossible. It has given rise to the Untouchability of some people and unless modified largely, it will go on keeping us divided, both horizontally

and perpendicularly. The caste system was a means for great spiritual progress, no doubt, but it kept, at the same time, large sections of people ignorant, illiterate and victims of priests and magicians. I just indicate the evil effects of caste. A voluminous book may be written on the evils that caste has created and thereby dwarfed us since the days of Mahomedan invasion. Had all the citizens been trained like the Romans or the Greeks of old to fight, we might not have been so weak. But at the same time, it may be doubted whether in that case the spiritual progress that was attained would be possible. The Brahmins, who embraced poverty for religion and *Jnan* or knowledge, would not have been able to do what they did. Neither among the Romans nor the Greeks such a self-less section of people ever grew. Among the Israelites, however, the Levites or priests and the prophets occupied a privileged position and it was these prophets who were pious and wrote the great Jewish literature. In my humble opinion the long penance of the Brahmins was the secret of India's spiritual and intellectual greatness. They were "न्यस्तशस्त्राः" (having given up arms and fighting) and dared to bless being cursed.

Another cause of the downfall was the monastic systems of Buddha and Mahavira.

They, like the Brahmins, being selfless did wonderful works for the spiritual, moral and intellectual betterment of the people. In my humble opinion it was they who practised the highest principles of morality and developed our ethical ideas. They thus supplemented the culture of the Vedas which had not put sufficient emphasis on the ethical principles of action. But when they became corrupt, being idlers and mendicants, they vitiated the atmosphere of the country and it was through their influence that many questionable cults of doubtful morality came into existence about the time of the Mahomedan invasion. I may just refer to "Prithvi Raj" of the late Mr. Jogindra Nath Basu, who has supplied facts to prove the moral decline of the people of India. There was a religious decline also since the 8th Century A. D., till the days of revival in the 15th and 16th centuries. The days of Chaitanya were days of spiritual deterioration, though various Trantic sects were flourishing. Thus Buddhism that made India so great and influenced so tremendously the culture of the outside world also ultimately proved a very potent cause of her demoralisation. The monks of the time of Henry VIII became similarly corrupted, so that the king appointed com-

missions of enquiry and ultimately abolished the monasteries. Here Buddhism disappeared of itself, though partially owing to the massacre of the monks by the Islamic invaders.

According to some critics our very religiousness has made us indifferent to wordly affairs and unpractical and this combined with such *sastric* injunctions as prohibited the crossing of the sea, has barred all progress. Late Mr. Guruprasad Sen wrote once, "The barrier of Kalapani has been the barrier to all progress." It is superficially so, but ultimately it is the deeply religious view of life that prevents people from extreme exertion. There is no doubt that the philosophy that proves the world to be an illusion interferes with the development of enterprise and manly endeavours. Really the greatness of the spiritual interest as concieved by the Rishis here makes other interests of life as of little consequence. It has made us patient and indifferent ; at the same time it has enabled us to submit to wrongs more calmly. This Vedantic attitude is stoical, where-as the dualistic philosophy inspires a ceaseless struggle against evils and thus makes its followers virile fighters and dynamical. We do require the help of the practical dualistic philosophy of the Semitic race for breaking our spell of torpidity

the effect of "सर्व्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म" (the universe is Brahman), though this is a great truth, greater than which man has not known yet.

We may hope, if the practical wisdom that we are acquiring from the professors of science and modern culture be combined and harmonised with the lessons left to us by the Rishis, we shall again be strong and ameliorated in all the concerns of our life. We must, however, not cut off our old moorings in the truths of the Upanishads. They require only to be reinterpreted in the light of the larger experience of life that we are acquiring and to be sincerely applied to the solution of our individual as well as national, moral and spiritual, problems. It is not by forgetting the aims and ideals of our ancestors, but by modifying them according to the changed circumstances of our lives that we are to survive and attain whatever Moksha or *mukti* is possible for us. We shall have to determine how we are to adhere to the old principles and how we may adjust them with the new ideals that are forcing themselves upon us. The whole human race is now one family and how we are to join the comity of nations and how to demean ourselves is a great problem. The Hindu ideals of *Jnana*, *Bhakti* and *Karma* must be preserved and followed under the altered circumstances of our lives.

APPENDIX

While giving an idea of the culture of *Bhakti*, it will not be out of place to enter a little into the discussion of the theory of incarnation as conceived by the author of the Gita, whose view of the theory must be regarded as right and authoritative. After stating the theory in the following verses :

यदा यदाहि धर्मस्य ग्लानि र्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

परित्राणाय साधूनाम् विनाशायच दुष्कृताम् ।

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥ (IV. 7-8)

[Whenever, during the ages, the principles of righteousness are bemired and those of unrighteousness become triumphant, I create myself ; for the purpose of saving the righteous and for the destruction of the unrighteous and also for the purpose of re-establishing righteous laws.]

He goes on to state more clearly the manner in which this birth takes place :

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यं एवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।

त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुनः ॥ (IV. 9.)

[O ye, Arjun, one who knows truly and correctly my birth and work, attains me, after

giving up the body, and is not subjected to re-birth].

The remarks of the great commentator Mdhusudan Saraswati as quoted by the learned Pandit Gaurgovinda Upadhyaya on this couplet may be rendered thus: Ignorant people think God suffers like ordinary mortals the troubles of being conceived in the mother's womb and he works like them for the maintenance of the body and for happiness. They do not understand that God who is above birth and death, and is eternally in enjoyment of *ananda* (joy) may simply *appear* as born and active. He really does not give up his free infinite nature. The following verses further confirm this view :

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नम् मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।

परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमं (Gita VII. 24)

[Those who lack intelligence consider me, the unmanifest and transcendent as embodid and manifest. They do not understand my supreme nature (infinitude), which can suffer no diminution (by birth) and which is supreme above all things].

This clear refutation of the crude idea of the ignorant about the birth and incarnation of God in the flesh puts all controversy out of court. The hair-splitting arguments of Christian com-

mentators or our popular writers on this subject, about the incarnation of Jesus or of our incarnations along with the defence of the Christian Trinity by philosophers seem to us to be special pleading and nothing more. Ramanuja, the philosopher, comments on this verse to the following effect : "I am the support of all things, so without giving up my own nature, I am born as the son of Basudeva. People, not being able to realise my nature, which cannot suffer any diminution, and which cannot be excelled by anything else consider me as other princely scions and think that I am born like other persons in accordance with the laws of *Karma.*" Hence we conclude that the birth of God as Basudeva Krishna is merely a symbol to indicate the manifestation in and interference with, by God, the affairs of mankind. Sridhar puts his remarks more clearly. "I am unmanifest and infinite, beyond the limits of the material things ; only the ignorant people consider me as incarnated in the form of man, fish etc. I am the supreme God and so for the preservation of the creation, I assume, in a sportful spirit, forms in which *Satwa* (goodness) predominates. I am unlike other gods who reward their worshippers speedily and therefore people expecting speedy rewards do not care for me".

Hindu commentators of old had no axe to grind, but were more anxious for the realisation of truth ; neither did they go out preaching any sectarian cult or killing false creeds and gods. The theory of incarnation, however, is so tempting and handy for certain purposes, that missionaries are employing it even in this enlightened age amidst scientifically advanced people and making capital out of it. It seems to us that the teachings of St. Paul and St. John have been twisted from their real meaning to create this theory as well as that of Trinity. We are all sinners and liable to sin ; there are others who are purer and freer from sins. But that should not justify us to hold that they are perfect embodiments of God. There are spiritually advanced people who by their love for and service to, others help them in their salvation and there are great teachers of spiritual truths, who by their sympathy merge themselves, as it were, into the personalities of sinners and help them out of the mire of sin. They are saviours in this sense and even now there are great teachers, who like the great Buddha, are anxious for the salvation of others. So far as the old Hindu ideal of *Bhakti* teaches, spiritual teachers must be regarded as supermen and mediums through whom God speaketh and this reverent attitude united with

love for their personality has been poetised as the theory of incarnation. An absolute regard for truth is a characteristic of the catholic Hindu mind.

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